NEW MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO HELP PARAMEDICS COPE WITH TRAUMA

A new mental health training program to better support paramedics to cope with the confronting, life-threatening emergencies they face every day will be rolled out across the state, thanks to a new partnership between Ambulance Victoria and beyondblue.

The new partnership is supported by $1 million in funding as part of the Andrews Labor Government’s plan to support our paramedics to stay mentally and physically healthy.

Sadly, the rate of suicide among paramedics is about four times higher than the average rate among employed Victorians.

Through the new partnership, Ambulance Victoria and beyondblue will join forces to design the new training program covering topics such as depression and anxiety, trauma, substance abuse and suicide prevention.

The training will support paramedics to be better equipped to understand mental health issues, recognise and respond to those at risk of suicide and receive advice on getting the help they need.

The mental health awareness training will commence this month for paramedics and managers before being rolled out state-wide across the organisation.

In the Victorian Budget 2016/17, the Labor Government is investing $144 million to fix the ambulance system after four years of crisis and neglect under the former Liberal Government.

As part of our Ambulance Response Time Rescue Fund, we are providing $2.7 million for a raft of initiatives to support paramedic health and wellbeing, including $1 million for mental health training.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Ambulance Services Jill Hennessy

“Paramedics face life and death emergencies, violence and major trauma every day on the job – this understandably takes its toll on their mental health and wellbeing.”

“Our paramedics do a wonderful job saving lives and taking care of others – that’s why we need to do everything we can to help save their lives and support them to take care of themselves.”

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley

“Suicide is preventable, and every suicide of a paramedic is one too many.”

“I encourage all paramedics to take care of themselves and never hesitate to speak out and get help.”

Quotes attributable to the Acting CEO of Ambulance Victoria Tony Walker

“Mental health and wellbeing is one of the most important issues facing our workforce and we are committed to improving it.”

“We are serious about providing the right programs to improve our paramedics’ mental health and wellbeing and our partnership with beyondblue will ensure this occurs.”

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Quotes attributable to the CEO of beyondblue Georgie Harman

“beyondblue is pleased to partner with Ambulance Victoria to deliver a program tailor-made for its employees. No matter what your role, you’re part of a workforce that – like any workplace in Australia – is diverse, has politics, brings satisfaction and connectedness.”

“Every first responder agency has different needs. Whether you work in a communications centre, on the road or behind a desk, managing a large team or at the start of your career, you bring your whole selves to work.”

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