

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to mental health services for first
 3 responders; creating s. 394.4675, F.S.; providing
 4 definitions; requiring the Division of State Fire
 5 Marshal to develop and implement a statewide
 6 behavioral health access program to provide certain
 7 mental wellness services and resources to first
 8 responders; providing requirements for the program;
 9 providing that first responders are not required to
 10 pay a copayment for the services and resources;
 11 providing training requirements for licensed
 12 professional counselors; requiring the program, by a
 13 specified date, to develop a specified plan and submit
 14 the plan to the Legislature; providing an effective
 15 date.

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 17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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19 **Section 1. Section 394.4675, Florida Statutes, is created**
 20 **to read:**

21 394.4675 Mental health services for first responders.—

22 (1) As used in this section, the term:

23 (a) "First responder" has the same meaning as in s.

24 112.1815(1) and includes 911 public safety telecommunicators as
 25 defined in s. 401.465(1)(a), correctional officers as defined in

26 s. 943.10(2), and correctional probation officers as defined in
27 s. 943.10(3).

28 (b) "Licensed professional counselor" means a clinical
29 psychologist, clinical social worker, marriage and family
30 therapist, or mental health counselor authorized to provide
31 services under s. 491.017 or a psychologist authorized to
32 provide services under chapter 490.

33 (2)(a) By engaging key stakeholders and partnerships with
34 established nonprofit or state university first responder mental
35 wellness initiatives, the Division of State Fire Marshal shall
36 develop and implement a statewide behavioral health access
37 program to provide comprehensive mental wellness services and
38 resources with a focus on prevention and early intervention to
39 reduce the prevalence of suicide and related mental health and
40 substance abuse disorders for first responders. The program
41 shall include all of the following:

42 1. Training on resiliency, mental health awareness, and
43 posttraumatic growth.

44 2. Developing and training of peer support teams.

45 3. Assisting first responder departments in building
46 behavioral health access programs including internal mental
47 wellness programs.

48 4. Establishing suicide prevention and mental health
49 communication campaigns.

50 5. Integrating with partners for state disaster

51 deployments under an emergency response plan.

52 6. Conducting statewide epidemiologic research on
53 incidence and prevalence of suicide and mental health-related
54 issues in this state.

55 (b) First responders are not required to pay a copayment
56 for the services and resources.

57 (3) The program shall provide a statewide network of
58 licensed professional counselors who meet additional training
59 requirements and who are available to provide services to first
60 responders, families of first responders, and retired first
61 responders at routine, urgent, and crisis levels of care. The
62 additional training must include training in trauma management
63 and evidence-based suicide prevention modalities with first
64 responders.

65 (4) By June 30, 2026, the program shall develop a research
66 and evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness and return on
67 investment of the program and submit the plan to the Speaker of
68 the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.

69 **Section 2.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.