

SaveOurLEO.org

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Abstract

LEO suicide is a global crisis and in the United States we are losing LEO's faster to suicide than we are to line of duty deaths including enemy fire and accidental death combined. LEO's have a high stress occupation that requires long hours and a commitment to schedules that often cause conflict with family members and family gatherings. LEO's are expected to risk their lives and confront head on a truly unspeakable amount of evil, trauma, and devastation on a daily basis and to do so for a public that has grown increasingly more and more less supportive of the efforts of LEO's. LEO's are required to be highly loyal to law enforcement agencies that may be highly unorganized due to employee turnover or labor shortage and who may or may not have the mental health and wellness of their LEO's as a priority. There has been a considerable amount of research done over the years on the reason why LEO suicide occurs and there are many strategies aimed at preventing further instances but they have not been working. We have reached a point where we must find the answer to bringing an end to the LEO suicide crisis. This research paper provides a review of; available research, relevant laws to counteract instances of LEO suicide, and concludes with the presentation of a two part solution to ending the crisis of LEO suicide.

Keywords: Acute Stress Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Early Warning Systems, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), Law Enforcement Officer (LEO), Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017 (LEMHWA), Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

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Problem

In 2019, according to Blue H.E.L.P., a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing law enforcement LEO (LEO) suicide, 228 current or former LEO's in the US committed suicide, and 172 LEO committed suicide in the US in 2018 (Barr, 2020). On a daily basis LEO are the first ones to respond to the most dangerous, disturbing, and demanding situations that an individual can possibly imagine. LEO are required to respond immediately to any and all situations and are expected to be able to triage at the scene of deadly accidents, respond to deadly attacks, and are expected to be ready to provide immediate first aid care and support to the public as well as to their fellow LEO's when in need. LEO work long hours filled with trauma causing events that often require life threatening involvement for LEO and these traumatic events eventually begin to wear on the psychological health of even the strongest of LEO's. The life threatening daily reality that LEO encounter results in the accumulation of a large amount of stress that can and often does eventually cause individual LEO's to experience feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness (Hilliard, 2019 as presented in Snipes, 2021).

A stigma exists in most law enforcement agencies that LEO should be able to handle all aspects of their job without ever needing psychological help. LEO's are more concerned about appearing weak or possibly negatively affecting the status of their employment for asking for help with any mental health issues that they may be experiencing than they are about the potentially catastrophic effects that their distress could possibly result in if they do not get the help they need. LEO's are expected to be able to deal with high stress and traumatic events simply because these events are part of the career they chose to pursue. An LEO will often harbor a false fear that they will have to turn their badge and gun in to their superiors as a direct

result of asking for psychological help. LEO's will often chose to not seek help for the trouble they are experiencing out of a false fear that they may very well lose the respect and trust of their fellow LEO's and of their agency and instead LEO's often choose to self-medicate with alcohol and illegal drugs in order to deal with their anxiety, stress, and fear (Hilliard, 2019).

Engaging in substance abuse behaviors in most communities across America is considered by many as an acceptable past time and can appear to be as benign as spending time at the local pub watching football, eating chicken wings, and drinking beer. The unfortunate reality is that as the LEO begins spending more and more time at the local pub drinking beer and alcohol to mask his/her pain and suffering the more likely it becomes that the LEO's substance abuse will in turn and often does cause a negative effect on his/her job performance, individual health, and family happiness. The LEO's poor performance at work and his problems with his/her spouse as a result of substance abuse cause the LEO to engage in even more substance abuse setting the LEO off on a downward spiral of self-destruction. One of the primary contributing factors to LEO suicide is substance abuse and seventy-two percent of the eighty-nine New York Police Department LEO that committed suicide tested positive for having alcohol in their systems at the time of their suicide (Hilliard, 2019).

The LEO community suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression at rates that are five times higher than that of the general public. LEO often experience mental health issues as a result of dealing directly with severely traumatic events and as a result LEO often experience feelings of being vulnerable and of being out of control. Repetitive exposure and involvement with highly traumatic events can even cause an LEO to lose confidence in their own ability to respond correctly to similar high stress situations. LEO suffer from domestic disputes, having their children feeling ignored and abandoned, and from

disrupted sleep patterns as a result of having to work long 12-18 hour shifts that often include overnight shift work. The job of LEO pays a modest salary which enables them to experience and provide their family with a modest middle class lifestyle and as a result many LEO suffer from financial strain when they or their family members are faced with a financial challenge. When LEO suffer financial stress they often turn to substance abuse in order to self medicate from the associated stress which in turn serves to only compound the difficulties and problems that the LEO experience. The combination of suffering from PTSD, depression, domestic disputes, financial distress, and ultimately substance abuse causes the LEO to become overwhelmed and in many tragic cases to ultimately commit suicide (Hilliard, 2019).

In order to reduce the prevalence of LEO suicide the law enforcement community must overcome the stigma that it is not ok for LEO to ask for help when an LEO is suffering. LEO experience massive amounts of trauma and devastation on a daily basis that accumulates as stress and anxiety in the minds, spirits and bodies of LEO. When an LEO is in need of assistance due to dealing with the trauma of others that they either encounter on the street or in the jail or prison or in their own lives it must not be considered a weak action for them to ask for help in processing what they are experiencing. If LEO's feel confident that they can ask for help when they need it without repercussion the LEO, the LEO's family, the LEO's agency and the public at large will all benefit from the LEO receiving the care that they need (Hilliard, 2019).

Significance

Why the Issue is Significant

As has been discussed being an LEO is a highly stressful occupation that is full of life threatening danger and LEO are often disrespected and attacked by the very public they are committed to serve and protect. LEO deal directly daily with the worst humankind has to offer

and LEO must constantly make decisions that can literally mean the difference between life and death. One out of four LEO has had thoughts of committing suicide at some point during their career and in 2019 2.3 times the number of LEO were lost to suicide than were lost in line of duty deaths to enemy attacks and accidental death combined. It is important to note that the decline in mental health that our LEO experience as a result of the nature of the job they do has for too long been simply dismissed as an expected byproduct of being a LEO. LEO's suffer from higher rates of; alcohol abuse, divorce, heart disease, sick days taken, and major psychological illnesses such as acute stress disorder, anxiety disorder, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder due to occupational stress. Despite all the trauma and devastation that LEO deal with they face a culture that does not embrace the importance of ensuring their mental health as LEO. Even though LEO are trained on how to identify and to safely and effectively interact with and even care for people suffering from mental illness, little to no attention or care is provided to LEO for dealing with their own anxiety, stress, and mental illness (Stefanik, 2017).

What is Being Done by Other Departments or Agencies

Congress enacted the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017 in January 2018. This Act directs the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) to submit a report to Congress a report that covers the same type of data that the report published by the COPS Office in 2015 entitled '*Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies in Law Enforcement*' focuses on which are case studies of programs all over the country that have been designed with the primary goal of addressing LEO psychological health and overall well-being. As legislated by Congress the report utilizes a case study format in order to successfully identify LEO mental health and wellness programs. National law enforcement organizations and professional associations sent out a survey authored

by the authors of the report requesting nominations of law enforcement mental health and wellness programs that were utilizing best practices and received back more than 30 nominations. The nominations were for law enforcement agencies of varying sizes from different geographical locations across the country with varying types of programs for their LEO. Eleven different programs were selected for the case studies and these locations were; Bend, Oregon; Charlotte Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Cop2Cop (a national hotline); Dallas, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Las Vegas, Nevada; Los Angeles, California; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Nashville, Tennessee; San Antonio, Texas; and Tucson, Arizona (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

A team was formed that visited each of these locations in order to conduct interviews of key personnel, observe the agency's facilities and available programs, and when and where possible ask questions of LEO of the agency being interviewed. The focus of the visit to each location was to document the benefits provided to LEO and to gain an understanding of a department's approach to LEO wellness and also to gain an insight into the established culture of wellness among the agency's LEO. An agency's diversity, salary provision, and benefits provision are pieces of the larger picture to be considered in partnership with an agency's wellness programming. A common theme was that the agencies had numerous strategies starting with the recruitment process all the way through to retirement that addressed a continuum of prevention strategies, early intervention techniques, crisis response, and agency approved follow up procedures, care and evaluation methodologies for victims of trauma (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

The results of the onsite interviews conducted at the agencies during the case studies indicate that a strong commitment is required from the law enforcement agency at all levels and that there is not one single solution for every crisis or problem but instead the best results are derived from applying a multifaceted holistic approach. The programs that these agencies are

utilizing are successful because they are issued by the top brass of the agency and compliance to these directives is requested throughout the agency and support for these programs is therefore agency wide. When the top-down approach is utilized to promote the use of these programs the process of doing so inherently prioritizes and supports LEO mental health and wellness. In addition, the top-down approach towards utilizing mental health and wellness programs for LEO serves to overcome the stigma that traditionally has surrounded the use of mental health and wellness programs and at the same time the top-down agency approved and promoted approach to the use of the programs and services establishes credibility and garners trust in the programs (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

The results of the case studies indicate the existence of a common continuum of mental health and wellness methodologies, programs, and strategies that begins with recruitment and hiring and continue on all the way through an LEO's career up to and including retirement. The continuum of mental health and wellness methodologies, programs, and strategies include; critical incident response; early interventions; ongoing support for LEO; proactive prevention; reintegration; resiliency building; and treatment for LEO, and their families. A holistic approach to LEO mental health and wellness was utilized by all eleven of the agencies included in the case studies and the holistic approach included a broader continuum of care and services inclusive of: character and moral development, early warning systems, financial stability, fitness, healthy relationships, how disciplinary procedures are handled, medical care, nutrition, peer support, self-care, sleep, and substance abuse. By utilizing a holistic approach to mental health and wellness the agencies interviewed in the case studies were able to effectively remove the traditional stigma of asking for help LEO's have had to deal with when reaching out for help and instead these proactive agencies provided the care that the LEO may need before the LEO even

had to ask for it and as a result of doing so may have most likely prevented potentially several LEO's from suffering on their own and in turn this approach may have very well prevented several LEO's from potentially committing suicide (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

The case studies effectively identified several ways that law enforcement agencies focus on ensuring LEO mental health and wellness. Health insurance is provided by most law enforcement agencies to their LEO and this health insurance usually provides at least some level of mental health service. Many law enforcement agencies have employee assistance programs (EAP) and these programs are usually provided by the local government unit responsible for funding the law enforcement agency, and these programs provide LEO with access to additional support services. Many law enforcement agencies are recognizing that in addition to providing their LEO with health insurance that they also need to be providing resources towards more comprehensive care inclusive of early prevention and intervention mental health and wellness methodologies, programs, and strategies for LEO's, and their families. Law enforcement agencies are actively exploring the adoption of additional methodologies, programs, and strategies such as early warning systems identification, crisis intervention training (CIT), and victim services. As law enforcement agencies and their LEO's become more comfortable with, more educated on, and more experienced with mental health issues they will also become better equipped to apply this knowledge towards the mental health and wellness issues their LEO's are dealing with (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

What Laws are Applicable

The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA)

In 2017, Congress passed The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) and it was signed into law in January 2018. LEMHWA passed both the House and

the Senate unanimously and without amendment proving that policymakers are in agreement in regards to the purpose, intended effects and the need for the law. Policymakers are in full agreement that law enforcement agencies are in need of and deserve full support in their efforts to safeguard and protect the mental health and well-being of LEO's. The timing of the act and the need to respond to the provisions of the law could not be more important than they are today. LEO and their families are now facing a divisive and dangerous national narrative that LEO on the federal, local, state, and tribal level are perceived not as the protectors of communities that they are but instead as tyrannical oppressors. The negative narrative towards LEO that is being pushed has increased stress levels for almost all LEO in all communities and the increase in stress levels will affect the mental health and wellness of LEO in all communities which provides further timely support of the importance of this new law. Approximately, 800,000 LEO's participate in millions of positive interactions within their communities every day, but nonetheless LEO's are finding that their actions are viewed with suspicion and are highly questioned despite how honorable their intentions may be. In this new environment, assumptions and misunderstandings can and unfortunately often do have as much of a negative impact on the public trust as deliberate challenges and provocations and LEO's ability to provide effective law enforcement services such as crime prevention and crime suppression. This combative and untrusting narrative towards our LEO has created a toxic environment with the public in many communities and has made an inherently stressful occupation even more stressful and in turn has put the mental health and wellness of LEO at even greater risk (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

The Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act

On June 16, 2020, after congress passed with a unanimous vote by the House of Representatives and the Senate, U.S. President Donald Trump signed the Law Enforcement

Suicide Data Collection Act. Assisting law enforcement agencies in gaining a better understanding of and therefore an improved ability to prevent suicides among current and former law enforcement LEO's at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels is the goal of this new data collection. The Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act requires the U.S. attorney general, to take action through the director of the FBI, in order to establish a data collection where law enforcement agencies will be expected to submit information regarding their LEO's who have either made a recorded attempt at suicide or who have died due to committing suicide. The FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) division is currently home to several other criminal justice data collections including; LEOKA, Hate Crime Statistic, National Incident-Based Reporting System, and the National Use-of-Force Data Collection so it was decided that the FBI's CJIS division would also be made responsible for establishing and managing this new data collection. The Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act requires the FBI to collect at a minimum, the following information for each LEO who either died by or attempted to commit suicide: the circumstances and events that occurred before the act or attempt, the demographic information of the LEO, the general location where the act occurred, the occupational category of the LEO, and the method used in each instance of suicide or attempted suicide by an LEO. The act provides the FBI one year to establish this new data collection and, after two years of collecting these data, the act requires the FBI to publish an annual report that contains the collected information on the FBI's website (Perine, 2021).

Other Significant Issues

Nanavaty points out that it is important that law enforcement leaders and their agencies to make a long-term organizational commitment to the continued good health and wellness of their officers. Nanavaty goes on to stress the importance of realizing that law enforcement agencies

traditionally do not prioritize helping officers with their personal lives and subsequently do not usually provide strategies on how to lead optimal lives or provide prevention plans to avoid health and wellness maladies typically associated with the profession. (Nanavaty, 2015). Kyron et al., 2020, points out the importance of the workplace of law enforcement agencies in that they are providing a supportive environment to their LEO's who are dealing daily with the highest amount of stress. Kyron et al. goes on to provide important data to argue for the importance of providing access to mental health services for first responders and that these services are also provided to first responder support staff (Snipes, 2021).

Violanti stresses the significance of recognizing the impact that a lack of organizational support, involvement in and with traumatic events, being engaged in shift work, the presence of a stigma associated with asking for help, and overall difficulties associated with fitting in with the police culture has on LEO's. Violanti also places great significance on recognizing that Domestic issues with a spouse and alcohol abuse were common precursors to suicidal ideation and suicide and that these domestic issues have been shown to arise primarily due to the stressful working conditions LEO's deal with on a daily basis. Violanti stresses the significance that the work of LEO's is characterized by chronic and traumatic stress, an overall lack of support, dangerous work conditions, and close public scrutiny and therefore the occupation of LEO inherently involves an increased risk of suicide. Violanti strongly stresses the significance of identifying risk factors that if caught early enough can help to initiate effective prevention programs and ultimately save lives (Violanti et al., 2019). Violanti in 2018 stressed the great significance of recognizing and changing the pervading police culture which is not accepting of any form of weakness either physical or mental which makes the possibility for an LEO to request help to be unfeasible and therefore this toxic culture places the LEO in great danger due to a perceived and

believed inability and unacceptability of asking for help. Providing support to Violanti's claims to the danger of the toxic LEO culture where asking for help is perceived as unacceptable, in 2018, Ramchand et al., published in the Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology an article entitled, *Suicide Prevention in U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies: a National Survey of Current Practices*, which provides details on a study that presents the results of a national survey that was conducted of U.S. law enforcement agencies' strategies for preventing officer suicide. 177 agencies from all over the United States were invited to be interviewed, and the results of the survey indicate that many agencies are engaged in efforts to promote officer wellness and to prevent suicide, but that officers are reluctant to seek help when they need it because they are concerned about confidentiality and possible adverse repercussions on their employment status as a result of reaching out for help (Snipes, 2021).

In 2020, Thoen et al., published in Psychological Services a national study titled, *Agency-offered and officer-utilized suicide prevention and wellness programs: A national study*, and the results of the study indicate clearly that Employee Assistance Programs or counseling services were the most prevalent types of programs made available to LEO's by law enforcement agencies and that planning for suicide prevention programs on the behalf of law enforcement agencies was for the most part not well established. According to the study, twenty five percent of the LEO's who responded to the study were not aware whether or not their agency had suicide prevention programming and thirty five percent of the LEO's believed that their agency failed at supporting the mental health and wellness of their LEO's. Significant to report is that LEO's that responded that they believed their mental health and wellness was supported by their agency also reported significantly less stress and a higher level of well-being. Strikingly, 12.4% of LEO's

who responded to the study reported that it was likely or very likely that they would attempt suicide someday (Snipes, 2021).

In January 2009, Feemster, Samuel L, MDiv, JD published in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin and article titled, *Spirituality: An Invisible Weapon for Wounded Warriors*, with an emphasis on the significance of LEO's having a spiritual perspective because it provides LEO's with an internal coping power that can be used to powerfully identify and confront the evil that they encounter on a daily basis. Feemster stressed the importance of realizing that LEO require more than physical defensive tactical training in order to successfully survive and combat the evil and negative conditions affecting LEO's. Feemster made a call to action for law enforcement training academies to include spirituality in their curricula and for LEO's to learn to take responsibility for their own spiritual health just like they do for their own physical and mental health (Feemster, 2009). In 2017, Moran published in Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion an article titled, *Workplace spirituality in law enforcement: a content analysis of the literature*, in order to determine how workplace spirituality is viewed in law enforcement and in training sessions and to propose new ideas for the integration of workplace spirituality in policing. In 2016, Brian A. Chopko published in A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society an article titled, *Spirituality and health outcomes among police officers: empirical evidence supporting a paradigm shift*, for the purpose of investigating what types of spiritual practices LEO's are currently pursuing and to determine whether or not the spiritual efforts of the LEO's had a positive effect on their stress levels and overall mental and physical health and if the LEO's following spiritual practices were in better or worse physical and mental shape than LEO's that were not participating in spiritual practice (Snipes, 2021).

Solution

Conducting research on LEO suicide and what caused it, why it was happening, how it was happening all led me to the same question which is clearly how do we stop LEO suicide from occurring at all. I have come to two conclusions. The first is that LEO's need to receive mental health and wellness screening annually just like LEO's need to take a physical annually or recertify their training annually. An LEO's mental health and wellness is a critical aspect of the LEO's ability to perform their job duties and more importantly to live a healthy and happy life. An LEO's mental health and wellness is a non-negotiable in the same manner that the operability of the engine of an LEO's patrol car is a non-negotiable. An LEO's mental health and wellness is a non-negotiable in the same manner that the operability of a correctional officer's keys is a non-negotiable. An LEO's mental health and wellness is a non-negotiable in the same manner that the functionality of an LEO's handgun is a non-negotiable. Clearly, an LEO's mental health and wellness is of critical importance and must be evaluated annually in the same manner as an LEO must be evaluated annually physically. So the first thing the law enforcement profession needs to do is to pass a national act that requires annual mental health and wellness checkups for all LEO.

Do Nothing

We are losing more LEO's to suicide than we are to line of duty deaths from enemy fire or by accidental death so doing nothing is in no way a legitimate solution in anyway whatsoever.

Incremental Approach

An incremental approach consists of required annual mental health and wellness checkups that can be beneficial in several ways. When annual mental health and wellness checkups are required for all LEO's, the option to not ask for help when needed due to the

presence of an agency created stigma around appearing weak and unsuited to perform the job or fear about losing one's job for asking for help will be significantly reduced if not completely eliminated. Required annual mental health and wellness checkups will also remove the possibility that an LEO may fail to get help due to failing to independently recognize when they may need to seek support. In addition, LEO's will be required to receive mental health and wellness checkups following stressful incidents that involve the death or a life changing injury of either a fellow LEO or a member of the public. This form of required mental health and wellness checkup process or program is often viewed as a type of psychological first aid. The goal of this approach is to ensure that an LEO's emotional state is observed and considered immediately following a critical incident and that an LEO's need for support does not compromise the department's level of service (Cops.usdoj.gov, 2019).

Full Implementation & Christian Worldview

Law enforcement agencies usually partner with a trusted police psychologist, a licensed mental health professional, or a licensed employee assistance provider to be responsible for addressing and managing LEO mental health. The law enforcement agency may also call on a member of the agency's command staff, or preferably as a Christian a departmental chaplain to address and support the mental health and wellness of its LEO's. This brings me to the second part and I believe the most important part of my suggested solution. In order to provide a fully implemented solution to the LEO suicide epidemic we must first require annual mental health and wellness checkup and second we must address and nurture the spirit of our LEO's and encourage our LEO to develop a personal relationship with God. We must accept the reality that many LEO's are struggling because they simply do not have a relationship with God. LEO's must be able to debrief with God and lay down their burdens. We as humans are simply not

capable of handling all the trauma, devastation, and stress that goes along with being an LEO without a relationship with God. It is absolutely imperative that LEO's develop a relationship with God and make God their partner in fighting evil and crime. LEO's must place their worries, burdens and anxieties in the hands of God if they wish to survive the battle against the enemy.

Christian Worldview

As Christians we know we are fighting a very real spiritual war and LEO's are the front line warriors in this spiritual battle against evil whether they know it or not. In order for LEO's to survive and thrive they must do as the Holy Bible tells us and Put On The Whole Armor of God. The Holy Bible tells us,

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (English Standard Bible, 2001, Ephesians 6:11-17)

Impact to Law Enforcement Agency

When LEO's turn to Jesus they find support for themselves and for their families in the faith of their savior that has conquered death, hell and the grave and who has enabled them to receive their eternal salvation as well as eternal salvation for their families. The new found faith of the LEO delivered them from the anxiety, suffering and sorrow that comes from doing the work of an LEO and enables the LEO to serve as a beacon of light to their fellow officers and supervisors. The positive attitude of LEO that can rest assured that Jesus will protect them and their families and deliver them from evil while enabling them to fight the evil they face daily is

of great value to their law enforcement agency. Christian LEO's exude a sense of positivity and light in the face of extreme evil and darkness and serve as a great example and leader for their entire agency.

Impact to External Stakeholders

Christian officers can take the love of Jesus into places and situations where civilians could never go. Imagine law enforcement officers across the country responding to every call for service with Christian compassion. Their changed lives and compassion for those usually looked down upon by society has the power to transform neighborhoods, cities and society as a whole (FCPO, 2021). Major external stakeholders are the family members of the LEO. Law Enforcement Agencies and LEO's must make taking care of and ensuring the emotional well being of spouses and children of LEO a priority. An LEO's family has to deal with the mental illness that an LEO suffers from so it is imperative for LEO to receive the help they need when they need it so that they do not do damage to the relationships that they have with their family members. Also, the community at large suffers if LEO's suffer mental illness. Law enforcement agencies, the public at large and the LEO's family all benefit from LEO's having and working from a Christian worldview.

Impact to Budget

Clearly losing an LEO to suicide comes with irreplaceable costs to the agency, the community and most importantly to the officer's family and loved ones. Beyond the deep sorrow and loss of moral that does affect and entire law enforcement agency why an LEO commits suicide there is also much less importantly a major financial loss as well. Recruiting in the new anti-LEO environment discussed in this paper has become more difficult and expensive as ever and training a new LEO is very expensive when all the expenses are added up. Requiring annual

mental health and wellness checkups and ensuring that LEO are physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy will provide a law enforcement agency with great benefits and will eliminate tragic losses of vital human resources in the form of a fellow LEO or brother or sister and will also serve to reduce labor expenses associated with recruiting, hiring, training and outfitting new LEO's.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, LEO's are expected to be in optimal physical and mental condition in order to graduate the LEO academy. The reality of being an LEO mandates that in order for the LEO to survive the battles against evil they face on a daily basis that they be in optimal physical, mental, and spiritual condition as well. The law enforcement community has done a great job of preparing, outfitting, equipping LEO's for the physical and mental challenges that they will face but unfortunately have failed to ensure that LEO's spiritual health is kept strong. Physical, mental, and spiritual health are all dependent on one another. The first part of the two pronged solution to ending LEO suicide I presented is to require annual mental health checkups for LEO's in the very same way that LEO's are currently required to receive a physical checkup annually and are required to annually recertify their training. The second and truly most important part of the two pronged solution to ending the crisis of LEO suicide is to ensure that LEO's have a sense of strong spiritual health so that they may successfully navigate through the evil energies of the daily events without succumbing to them or to their negative influence or effects. As Christians we are all well aware that for LEO's to be successful in standing against and fighting against the evil present in society today LEO's must be spiritually strong and the only way to be spiritually strong is to have a relationship with God. As Christians we must accept the reality that LEO's are struggling because they do not have a relationship with God.

LEO's must be able to debrief with God and must be able to lay down their burdens and allow God to direct their lives. We as humans are simply not capable of handling all the trauma, devastation, and stress that goes along with being an LEO without a relationship with God. It is absolutely imperative that LEO's develop a relationship with God and make God their partner in fighting evil and crime. LEO must place their worries, burdens and anxieties in the hands of God. This research paper serves as the launching pad for SaveOurLEO.org.

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