



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 21, 2021

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt

Office: 920-386-4115

dschmidt@co.dodge.wi.us

Mental Health Care Provided at No Cost to Sheriff's Office Employees

Dodge County Sheriff Dale Schmidt is very excited to announce a partnership between the Dodge County Sheriff's Office and Church Health Services, Inc. (CHS) for providing mental health care to all employees of the sheriff's office at no cost.

Several months ago, Sheriff Schmidt inquired of CHS Executive Director Thea O'Connor about the idea of CHS providing services to employees. Sheriff Schmidt explained many of the traumatic and tragic incidents that all our employees are required to respond to, including incidents in the public, on 911 phone calls and in the jail. Our employees are required to view incidents and images and work with families dealing with tragedy frequently as part of their positions. Many citizens may never see or hear the things law enforcement agencies see and hear daily, in their entire lifetime. These incidents and images stick with our staff for days, months and even years and frequently can result in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As we look at the history of the law enforcement profession, it has always been a career associated with high rates of suicide and divorce, which can directly be attributed to the work that law enforcement performs every day.

Executive Director O'Connor immediately jumped at the opportunity and offered to provide mental health services to all of our employees at no cost to the county or our employees. She introduced us to one of her employees, Cassandra Heideman, who is only the second person in the State of Wisconsin to complete training as a Certified First Responder Associate. She is highly trained with a Master of Arts Degree in Clinical Counseling and is a Licensed Professional Counselor-In Training and a Licensed Substance Abuse Counselor.

Earlier this month we partnered with CHS and look forward to a long-lasting partnership in taking care of our staff's mental health. Sheriff Dale Schmidt is thrilled by this partnership as law enforcement has always been tasked with helping other people when they are in need and now we can help those who help the community when they are in need. These services have already been utilized by our staff and we are already receiving very positive feedback on the impacts of the services being provided. This program supplements the other services which the sheriff's office implemented for our staff in recent years to keep them mentally healthy and ready to serve our citizens.

On behalf of all of the employees at the Dodge County Sheriff's Office, we would like to sincerely thank Church Health Services for their dedication to our community and our sheriff's office.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt.

Attached Photo Left to Right: Captain Chad Enright, Sheriff Dale Schmidt, Executive Director Thea O'Connor, Chief Deputy Scott Mittelstadt

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