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DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Gurbir S. Grewal
Attorney General



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AG Grewal and NJSACOP President Chief Christopher Leusner Featured in Debut Webcast of “Resilient Minds On The Front Lines”

- Series of webcasts will promote mindfulness, wellness and resiliency for all workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 Pandemic

TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and Middle Township Police Chief Christopher Leusner, President of the NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP), appeared today in the debut webcast of “Resilient Minds on the Front Lines”— a new program to promote resiliency for workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 19-minute webcast can be found here:
njoag.box.com/s/g7h6gsobue7btb2duzt4epwnag1etg4g

“Resilient Minds on the Front Lines” is a collaborative initiative of the Attorney General’s Office, Division of Criminal Justice, Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office, and numerous partners. It was conceived by Mercer County Chief Resiliency Officer Michael Pellegrino and his wife, Diana, who saw a need to support all workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, including, among others, police officers, firefighters, first responders, nurses, doctors, grocery store employees, factory workers, warehouse workers, military members, truck drivers, teachers, chaplains, and their family members.

In a series of webcasts, guests and experts will, discuss, teach and encourage mindfulness, wellness, and resiliency for those frontline workers and others. The webcasts will feature master resiliency trainers from New Jersey and the FBI National Academy, academic resiliency instructors from New Jersey and New York colleges, representatives of Cop2Cop, musical and celebrity guests, and first responders who have experienced hardship and are comfortable sharing their stories of resiliency. The webcasts will offer 15 minutes of hope in a world turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re leading the nation with our comprehensive statewide program to promote officer well-being and prevent officer suicides— the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement,” said Attorney General Grewal. “This new program recognizes that, with this unprecedented health emergency, we have many more workers who suddenly are also experiencing extraordinary levels of stress every day and bringing that stress home

to their families. These webcasts will serve to throw a lifeline to all of the heroes on the front lines by introducing them to ideas, practices and sources of support that can help them cope with pressures that can be truly overwhelming.”

“Many are struggling during this pandemic with feelings of isolation, fear, and stress, and for healthcare workers and first responders, those feelings are heightened by the risk of being infected while performing their jobs and potentially exposing their families,” said Director Veronica Allende of the Division of Criminal Justice. “It is gratifying to be able to take what we have learned from teaching resiliency to police officers and apply it now to all of our frontline workers in this time of crisis.”

“I want to thank Michael and Diana Pellegrino for conceiving this program and for devoting so much of their own time, energy, and resources to make it a reality,” said DCJ Deputy Director Robert Czepiel, New Jersey’s Chief Resiliency Officer. “In the course of my work, I have seen how the principles of resiliency can transform lives, and I have met inspiring individuals who came back from the brink by practicing resiliency. I know that these webcasts will have a real impact.”

“Our police officers and other essential workers are answering the call to serve and protect our state in these unprecedented times,” said Chief Leusner. “These brave men and women know the risks but understand their communities need them. This pressure can understandably take a toll on them and their families. We must do everything in our power to provide them with support and tools to cope with these uncertain and challenging times. My hope is these webcasts will help accomplish that.”

Attorney General Grewal would like to thank the following individuals for providing their expertise, time, and support creating the webcast and website: Mercer County Chief Resiliency Officer Michael Pellegrino and his wife, Diana Pellegrino, owner of DPM Shore Solutions; Dr. Kate Tumelty Felice, Rowan College of South Jersey; Dr. C. Gabrielle Salfati, John Jay College; Joseph Collins, Acadia Healthcare (Chief Two Rivers Police Department [ret.]); William Mazur, Acadia Healthcare (Deputy Chief Atlantic City Police Department [ret.]); Cherie Castellano, Executive Director Cop2Cop; Detective Megan Flanagan, Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office; Jack Aponte (Kaptain Jack), owner of Jerseyshorecountry.com; Lt. Michael Wiltsey, Burlington County Prosecutor’s Office; Michele Alberts, teacher at Howell High School; Rev. Barry Vazquez, Head Chaplain, Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office; Assistant Ocean County Prosecutor Renee White; Rev. Gary Holden, Founder and President of Chaplains Program; Captain Dmitri Collins, Camden County Corrections; Holly Lees, Administrative Assistant, Division of Criminal Justice; Dr. Adrienne Fessler-Belli, Director of Disaster and Terrorism Branch, NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services; Steven Crimando, Director of Training for Disaster and Terrorism Branch, NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services; David Leonardis, Division of Criminal Justice Training and Community Outreach Liaison; Randy Richert, FBI National Resiliency Instructor (Colonel USAF [ret.]); and Matt Kennon, singer/songwriter.

Visit the newly launched website of “Resilient Minds on the Front Lines” for additional information about the program and to watch new webcasts as they are posted:
www.OnTheFrontLines.us

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