

## **Ontario to Introduce Legislation to Support First Responders with PTSD**

*New Law Would Help Expedite Identification, Intervention and Treatment*

February 18, 2016 1:00 P.M.

Today Ontario intends to introduce legislation that would create a presumption that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in first responders is work-related, leading to faster access to resources and treatment.

If passed, the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder), 2016 would allow faster access to WSIB benefits and timely treatment, ultimately supporting positive recovery outcomes by:

- Once diagnosed with PTSD, expediting the claims process to be eligible for WSIB benefits
- Removing the need to prove a causal link between PTSD and a workplace event
- Requiring employers to implement PTSD prevention plans within the workplace

The proposed presumption would apply to police officers, firefighters, paramedics, workers in correctional institutions and secure youth justice facilities, dispatchers of police, firefighter and ambulance services, and First Nations emergency response teams.

This is the next step in the [government's strategy](#) to prevent or mitigate the risk of PTSD and provide first responders with faster access to treatment and the information they need to stay healthy.

### **QUOTES**

" Given all that we ask of our first responders, it is only fair that we support them when they need us most. This legislation will give first responders and those who work in corrections the peace of mind they deserve, and our prevention, resiliency and research initiatives will round out a comprehensive PTSD approach we can all be proud of and that will protect the brave men and women who we entrust with keeping us safe and secure."

- Kevin Flynn

Minister of Labour

" Our government's comprehensive approach to PTSD is all about preventing, diagnosing, and supporting the recovery of those who keep our communities safe every day. We have seen the devastating impact PTSD can have on those who keep us safe - such as our police officers, firefighters, dispatchers, and correctional officers and other frontline staff in our correctional institutions. The Supporting Ontario's First Responders' Act is part of a comprehensive approach to ensure our first responders have the proper supports and resources in place to ensure their physical and mental well-being."

- Yasir Naqvi

Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services

## **QUICK FACTS**

- Evidence shows that first responders are at least twice as likely compared to the general population to suffer PTSD, due to the risk of routine exposure to traumatic stressors.
- The proposed legislation would apply to more than 73,000 first responders in Ontario.
- On March 5, 2015, Ontario hosted the Summit on Work Related Traumatic Mental Stress. The province's strategy builds on the dialogue and feedback from the Summit.

## **LEARN MORE**

- [Read the report from the Summit on Work-Related Traumatic Mental Stress](#)

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