



HEALING OUR OWN

CA FIRE SERVICE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

September 4, 2018

Brothers and Sisters:

Firefighters are asked to face horrors few can imagine, from mass casualty events, to the intimate pain of a child dying in their arms. It can take its toll on even the strongest individuals. Sometimes, the stress boils over. Sometimes, it can kill.

Last year, more firefighters died from suicide than from on-duty events. National surveys suggest nearly one in three firefighters has considered suicide. In the last two months, three California firefighters died by their own hand. In many cases, post-traumatic stress injury is the cause, and all too often, our brothers and sisters suffer in silence.

September is National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. To help bring this pain out of the shadows, we are calling on all California fire departments to participate in a Behavioral Health Suicide Prevention and Awareness Safety Stand Down.

During the week of September 10 through September 14, drills and activities should be canceled, replaced by kitchen table sessions with behavioral health and suicide awareness as the focus. Discuss the impact of the job, how to give and get help, and where to go for resources.

Enclosed is a poster that includes critical information. Please consider putting it up in a central location, so the resources are visible. Tools, resources and personal stories to help get the conversation started can be found at www.HealingOurOwn.org.

It's time to break the silence, and break the stigma. That starts with each other. For you, your family and your brothers and sisters, take some time next week and stand down for suicide awareness.



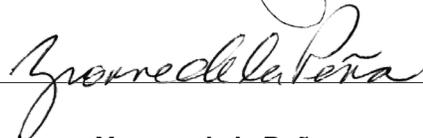
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