

**Item**

Amend Douglas Police Department Police PAT53 – Employee Mental Health and Wellness to include a mandated wellness exam through a licensed clinician annually.

**Responsible Staff Contact**

Chief Todd Byerly  
Sergeant Rudy Toman

**Recommendation**

Approve amended policy Pat 53 – Employee Mental Health and Wellness.

**Executive Summary**

Police officers are continually plagued with traumatic events through their careers that impact their emotional well-being and potentially the well-being of other employees, family members, and those in the community. The department has a moral and ethical obligation to ensure the success and safety of each employee. The addition of the annual wellness exam will work to diminish the stressors placed on employees through their career and benefit the emotional wellbeing of all (See Background for more).

**Background**

The Douglas Police Department implemented an Employee Assistance Program in 2020 through Dr. Jerry Post which provides access to a network of specially selected professionals with experience working with first responders in the area of Mental Health and Wellness. Many employees take advantage of this benefit and at times, have been mandated to see a licensed clinical psychologist for issues that impact their well-being and performance. These sessions with the licensed clinical psychologist remain confidential between the employee and psychologist. This agency has seen the impact associated with the degradation of mental health as we suffered the loss of an officer by suicide, and another in a 6-hour stand-off with another. After both incidents, we utilized the service of the EAP to have a department wide mental health debrief in effort to diminish the trauma associated with these events.

The inclusion of the yearly wellness examination to Police PAT53 is designed to diminish the negative impacts associated with trauma while increasing job satisfaction and retention. This annual visit is strictly confidential between the service provider (extenuating circumstances for release of information) and employee and may consist of a ProQOL-5 for burn-out, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma. The psychologist could give the employee feedback on areas that they are struggling and followed up by feedback on interventions that may be helpful such as trauma focused therapy, supportive EAP interventions, couples therapy, etc. These sessions will be blocked out during the course of two to three days and the psychologist, and the sessions will take place at the Douglas Police Department or designated area. The cost of the sessions will be covered under the EAP program, however additional cost incurred will be for housing and meals for the psychologist.

