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S1: 00:12 All right. Thank you all for coming back together. Our next panel, we have from the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, the Chief of Coon Rapids, Chief Brad Wise and from the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, Sherrif Tim Leslie of the Dakota County Sheriff's Department. What we've asked them both to do is to do between 10 and 15 minutes each and then if everyone would hold their questions to the end, that would be appreciated. So let's see. We'll go with my old colleague first. Sheriff Leslie, if you'd like to start.

S2: 00:49 Thank you, commissioner. Thank you for doing this. I think this is a very, very important step in the efforts to understand. I watched this morning on live stream, and it was raw, to have lost a child to the circumstance would be undecipherable. So thank you for doing this. Who I am: born and raised in Minneapolis, went to Washburn High School, I crossed the river, became a St. Paul police officer in 1980. John was one of my first-- he called me his rookie. So I worked with John in the squad [inaudible] eastside on the midnight shift many, many years ago. After 23 years in the St. Paul Police Department, I left, went to the state, became an assistant commissioner in Minnesota Department of Public Safety. I was overseeing the enforcement regulatory divisions here. And then in 2010, I left, went to the Dakota County Sheriff's Office. I'm in my second term as sheriff there. I'm representing 87 sheriffs today. From across the state, I am doing that on behalf of the Minnesota Sheriff's Association. I'm one of the board of directors there. But I have to tell you, this is a wide array of people. We have [inaudible], the sheriff in Cook County, who's closer to Canada than to Duluth. I have Sheriff Evan Verbrugge down in Rock County who when he flies somewhere, he goes to Omaha to fly out. So we have a wide variety of opinions, perspectives, and I will do my best to share those. Let me start by making sure that we're clear. Those of us in the profession do not exist to harm, kill, or hurt human beings. That's not why we're created. We understand that when we signed up there was a potential for us to be hurt because we're taking away someone's liberty when we place them under arrest. That's a big deal. We understand that. We believe in the rule of law, that people are innocent until proven guilty. And it's just as important if not more important to free the innocent than convict the guilty. All the sheriffs have policies in place to guide behavior of the deputies. We take that very seriously. And from a purely theoretical perspective, we work on behalf of the people. To enforce the laws they have passed to solve a problem. Simply put, DUI, domestic abuse. Just this last session, the hands-free cell phone bill. That was put in place because there was a problem in society. People were dying because people were distracted by cell phone use. We then become the enforcers. We are human beings, as was stated this morning and by the victim's families. We need high-quality smart people to do this job of 21st century policing. I would encourage those of you interested in what we do, especially those in the audience and especially those who are critical of law enforcement, to come and ride along with us. We have nothing to hide the issues of society that we, face for all of us to solve, are complicated and challenging. We could always use a fresh set of eyes, so come see what we see, come see how we do it. We are a profession that is many times more art than science. Walk

a mile in our shoes, and we will try to do the same. What I've heard from sheriffs across the state is that they're supported by the constituencies they serve and that overall people are pretty happy with the services that have been provided. Some express frustration over a feeling, in a sense that we cannot meet every possible demand that society is placing on us. To further that, we used human beings policing other human beings, in complex and mystifying social circumstances, homelessness, poverty, addiction, mental illness, together with the demands for justice for victims of crime. We remain unconvinced that we can satisfy everyone here, but our steadfast and our commitments are to public safety in our communities. Fundamental thing about the world of policing, sometimes people get arrested. This is an encounter that's critical to all of this, please pay attention to that in your research.

S2: 05:30

Today there were 234 inmates in the Dakota County jail, every morning they tell me how many are in there, and I pay particular attention to it. I know how many veterans, I know how many females because it's a concern, it's a reflection on how we're doing in society. I will take anyone on a tour at any time, just ask. I'd like you to see the programs we offer, GED, anger management, resume writing, proper writing. We do everything we can to meet them where they're at so that they have some hope when they leave because 99.9 are coming out, they're going to be standing next to you at Target. One suggestion we've heard from sheriffs is a study of close calls or near misses, just like the airline industry does. When we have a circumstance or a situation that results in an officer pointing their gun, or shooting at someone and missing, let's take a look at that. What do we learn from it? What were the circumstances surrounding that? This might be able to lend us some information to train differently or to look at things differently. That was my perspectives. Now the challenges. I read a study recently that said over 80% of the people seriously in an encounter with law enforcement are drunk or high. We can talk about that challenge all day long. It would not surprise me as we continue to see record numbers of drugs in our communities that we serve. The Twin Cities is now designated a high-intensity drug trafficking area, that's probably not something that the Chamber of Commerce would want to talk about. We used to be a source city, now we're a distribution center. Our point to that is that we encounter many people who are intoxicated or high on drugs, they act and react differently than they would if they were sober. This is a huge challenge for us. Crisis responses and other challenges we face. We make house calls, many times law enforcement becomes the default for everything. Combine the crisis call with the fact someone might be high or drunk, and that takes on an entirely different reaction from human beings. Another challenge we face, we'd like more sharing of information. We know that the individuals we deal with, in the community are cycling into the social service system as well as the health care system; emergency rooms primarily. The \$6 million the legislature appropriated for training in the three areas - crisis intervention, conflict management, and bias policing - are making positive steps, in our opinion. I know it's early, so it might be a little bit of anecdotal, but I think that it is making a change for the better. If we are the default first responder to all things wrong in society, then please keep sending us better tools and training. We have great people that want to serve. In the last group I hired, almost everyone had done volunteer in the community with people who are in need of either recovery or counseling. Deputy wellness is another challenge for the profession. If our people are overstressed, tired, or worn out, they will not have the compassion, energy, or strength to help others as easily as they would if they were relaxed and refreshed. Just think of yourselves as parents, with the little ones screaming and yelling. And if you've not got enough sleep, you can imagine what I'm talking about. We have a wellness program at the sheriff's office. We knew we needed one, and that was confirmed when I had a correctional sergeant commit suicide in the parking lot of the jail in December of 2018. His personality lit up the

room. He is sorely missed. In the aftermath from his death, we realized that people were hurting. Since then we've created a peer support program and modeled it after the one at Saint Paul Police Department Sgt. Brian Casey has led.

S2: 09:53

Last week at the county fair, ran into the couple peer support deputies that were helping volunteer there. He came up to me and said, "We are really busy with peer support." And I went, "Am I to be happy or sad?" I'm happy, but I also know that they've encountered some situations that many people don't get to encounter or have to encounter. They performed CPR on a six-month-old for over 30 minutes the other day, and they were not successful. So those things erode some coping skills and have a stress level that needs to be addressed. Specifically, towards the investigation piece, I think you heard the county [attorneys?] talking about timeliness. These investigations are tremendously detailed, we get that, but the longer we wait, the longer families are also waiting, and in turmoil, and unsure of what's the outcome. Technology is a challenge. Improving all agency technologies would help. Our in-car camera systems can be triggered to turn on automatically. I think body cameras need to be done the same way. Remove that discretion or don't put the deputy in a situation where they have to decide between turning on their camera or removing their handgun in a threatening situation. There should be some automatic turn on. Resources. Technology's not cheap. Some agencies across the state are having a hard time getting staff to meet the mission, let alone putting body cameras on people. Supervision. I think Attorney General Ellison tweeted out this morning, 60% of the [action?] of all shootings were in greater Minnesota. I'm not sure how often they have 24-hour supervision there, but I can think back to when I was a young patrol officer [laughter]. Supervision saved my career; strong supervision. We're dealing with complex and mystifying human behavior that can be confounding and difficult to manage, having more people there with experience can be and will be very helpful. The use of deadly force is a response that we take very seriously. And we pray it never happens. Thank you.

S3: 12:20

Thank you, commissioner. I appreciate it. As the commissioner said, my name is Brad Wise. 28 years ago, roughly, as a college student, I made the career choice to be a law enforcement officer. And, obviously, you hear a lot of testimony, we heard some from the sheriff here and others testified earlier today and will in the future, but I'll tell you that I'm worried. Choosing this career path was one that I had some passion for, but frankly, sitting in 2019, I'm not sure I'd make the career choice that I did if I was 22 years old. And that worries me. We have to make sure that when all of this is said and done that we leave the profession or the status of the profession being one that young people want to choose, a wide variety of people to choose. Some of the people that were here this morning, speaking from the heart, those people need to choose that profession too. The community are all of us and everyone who represents every aspect of the community has to be wanting and willing to step up to be in these circumstances. You're going to hear a bunch of talk about how complicated the job has become. It is far more complicated than it was when I first started. And as the sheriff said, law enforcement has become the fallback position for almost everything. And I'm going to highlight a couple of things. In particular, stories that mattered a lot to me, because I heard this morning from a very passionate young man who talked about mental health and the impact on law enforcement and deadly force encounters that result from mental health situations. I can speak from my own experience. In 2015, in Coon Rapids, a city of 62,000, we responded to 5 hundred 911 calls for service related to mental health. Of those 5 hundred, 18 were at Mercy Hospital, which is a metro hospital, a big hospital in my city, 5 of those 18 calls were to the mental health ward of Mercy Hospital. There were physicians, there were psychiatrists, there were nurses, there were aides, there were any number of staff 24

hours a day 7 days a week in the mental health ward that deal with nothing but people in crisis, yet, 5 times in 2015, those people couldn't handle the person that they were dealing with and called 911. And the person who showed up may have been a 23-year-old police officer fresh out of the academy and was expected to intervene. And the only reason, that officer was expected to intervene is because the officer had the capacity to use force. That's why that officer was called.

S3: 15:11

Similarly, I have a school example. We have a middle school in our community. There was a young man with autism who had-- I don't know how to describe it, we'll just say he was having a difficult day, challenging day. There were autism paraprofessionals that worked with that student every day all the time. There were more than one of them in the school. The student was walking around, and the staff was fearful that the student who was having the crisis was going to harm either a staff member or another student, and again, called 911. The person with the professional training to deal, specifically, with an autistic child was incapable of handling that situation and worse, the school itself had a policy that said that the staff of the school was to have a hands-off of the student involved. They wouldn't touch him. And that's something that this group can explore to talk about the policies of other agencies, on how they can intervene without a law enforcement officer ever having to show up. Because I can tell you when the officer showed up again, the only tool they brought that was different was the ability to use force. Their experience in dealing with children who have some spectrum in autism was vastly inferior to that of the staff who said that they needed help. Another example, in a similar vein, is that we have a high-needs individual in the city of Coon Rapids, a mental health circumstance. He's in a home in Coon Rapids by himself. And actually, it's been in the news, so if you wanted to google or look up Coon Rapids Group Home. We've gone to health and human services a number of times about that individual. This young man works with four staff members who are trained specifically to work with him, yet regularly, and by regularly, I mean roughly 50 times a year in the 3 times that he's been there. That staff will call 911 to say that he's out of control, and they need the law enforcement officers to help. So, I went to Commissioner Emily Piper Johnson at the Department of Human Services along with my local legislators to talk about how this situation is untenable. It cannot be that 911 gets called when this young man is in crisis every time. And it was a debate like I will never forget between her and I, especially because there were no fewer than 15 people in there, to include elected leaders in the capital here, and she barked at me, "What would you like me to do?" And I said, "What I would like you to do is make sure the last page of the person's plan is not to call 911, something else." And her response was, "Every person in mental health crisis last page is to call 911." This is a real opportunity for change. We can make the change when it comes to these mental health incidents, and there's a different way to go about doing it. Because I'm telling you, no officer showing up at a person in crisis is going to have the experience needed every single time to deal with that person. I looked in the newspaper-- actually, when I knew I was going to testify, I looked in the newspaper. I looked up an article that said that it took 3 months to get an appointment with a psychiatrist. It takes 3 minutes to get an officer to show up in my town. It's not hard to understand why people call 911. But they're not getting a psychiatrist. And we got to figure out a better way.

S3: 18:48

That said, is that I want to talk a little bit about due process. And in the end, I know that due process is going to be a big part of this. My officers and, frankly, any officer I know, any decent law enforcement officer, does not fear scrutiny. They are scrutinized from the minute they start working to the minute they hang up their gun belt and end their career. They understand scrutiny. What they want is due process, a fair process. There's none of them that don't understand that an officer-involved

shooting is a big deal. And these officers who are pinning on the badge, the men and women, come from all walks of life. Their not superhumans. They have fears. Not one of them, I assure you, wants to be involved in a violent confrontation with anybody. They're just as scared as anybody might be when somebody is under the influence or armed or agitated or whatever society can throw at them in terms of violence. There is fear. Fear's a part of it. And it needs to be managed. And they understand the scrutiny that goes with it. They just want due process and I think we need to give that to them as a part of this. And the one thing I guess I would say and actually I give [thoughts?] on this topic a lot in that we need a new tool. We need new tools. Police officers have been carrying a handgun for a long time and nobody's come up with a better tool. Officer-involved shootings will end when-- and I'm not being glib about this. But Star Trek, remember phasers set to stun? Remember that? The day that we issue phasers set to stun to officers, officer-involved shootings will disappear. They'll be a thing of the past. We need new tools. We had a handgun. We have our hands and then a handgun and not [bullet?] good in between. And it would be great if there would be some sort of-- well, I don't know, somebody work on a project of developing something that can be different. And if we find the right tool, maybe we can deal with this effectively. That said, I had a whole bunch of things I guess I was sort of rehearsing, what I might want to say to you. To be honest, you're a rather intimidating group for me. It's a tough subject, emotions are high and raw, a lot of people suffered loss, and it's painful. But I want to just be conversational and frankly, if anyone of you are interested in talking with me after this or some other time, I'd be happy to have a candid conversation. Because one thing's for certain, we have to be honest. Because there's a urge for me to tell you all what I think you might want to hear but that doesn't get us anywhere. I need to be able to tell you what I think. I'm doing the best I can here. But if some of you want to have a more candid conversation, feel free to call me. I'm easy to find. Thank you.

S4: 21:58

Any questions? [inaudible] General [inaudible] Peterson. [inaudible].

S1: 22:04

I'd like to hear if you guys have any thoughts-- first of all, thank you very much. Thank you very much on two very thoughtful presentations. I'd like to hear your thoughts on the Minnesota Supreme Court case, the Kinsey versus Richfield case. For those who may not know about this case and I'm sure you guys know all about this case but it's a case where the chief in the city of Richfield saw that there was a officer who used what the chief thought was unnecessary excessive force on a citizen. And I don't know the entire history but that event led to a discharge and the arbitrator reinstated. And then when it got to the supreme court, the supreme court said that based on the arbitration rules, that the chief could not discharge that individual and that the arbitrator's decision to keep them on the force what was going to be upheld. I don't blame the supreme court because I think they were doing their best to interpret the law. But I guess my question to you is, generally, what do you think about that decision? Are we doing this the right way? Do we need to-- do you need the ability to say, "I think this is a person who might be great at another profession but not law enforcement. And how can I govern my department if I could not make a discharge stick, given the arbitration rules?" I'll let you answer.

S3: 23:44

Mr. Attorney General, that officer should have been fired and should have stayed that way. To be honest, the discipline arbitration system is broken. It has been broken. The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association has taken a position on it and hopefully, we brought a in the legislature. And I'll tell you exactly how it's broken. The arbitration system that's in place for discipline is the same arbitration system that's in place for interest or for contracts. And the way it's designed is a split-the-baby mentality, meaning that the arbitrators have an extreme incentive to make a 50-50 decision, meaning half the decision's pro-employer, half the decision's pro-employee because

that's the only way they'll get selected to be arbitrators. And just so you know, it's a specific statute that says that the way it works is that you appeal to the Bureau of Mediation Services. When an arbitration case goes to the Bureau of Mediation Services, they send a list of seven arbitrators, an odd number of arbitrators, and then each side takes turns striking one name from the list until one is left. It makes perfect sense for contract law. It makes no sense for discipline. Arbitrators know that unless they have a nice balance of decisions, they're never going to be the one who's selected, and that needs to change. And if this group can help make that happen, I'm all in favor. I'll be at any committee hearing I can be to help make that happen.

S2: 25:23

Yeah. Mr. Chair, members, see, I would have to agree with Chief Wise. DJ [Teiss?] wrote a column, I think, about a week or two subsequent to the Supreme Court decision, and basically outlined exactly what the chief just said. The arbitration system is broken. It's cut the baby in half. The only way they're going to get employed is to split the baby, and I've seen that many times, where I thought I had a pretty foolproof case of termination turn into a 30-day suspension. I think Saint Paul has experienced that as well. I experienced it both at Saint Paul and at the Dakota County Sheriff's Office.

S5: 26:04

I guess my question is somewhat related. It may have been already answered. It's more for the sheriff. And thank you both for your testimony. Sheriff, you talked about substance abuse and what I interpreted as a need to have better training, more resources, particularly outside of the department, to support cause related to people with mental health issues of substance abuse more or less. That's what I've heard. What I'm interested in hearing is what are your recommendations for when those issues happen within your department with your officers and for officers that are coming with notable rugged behavior, use of force. What are your recommendations for that?

S2: 26:48

Mr. Chair, members, we've been doing the 40-hour Minnesota CIT training. So, it's the kind of the Cadillac, if you will, of training for understanding those who are in crisis and how to address those.

S5: 27:05

And that is for officers?

S2: 27:06

Yes. All sworn law enforcement. And we're also doing it for correctional deputies because we think that the ability to discover someone in crisis in the jail-- you just got arrested. You're probably still drunk or high when you get arrested. That's just as important because I have many suicide attempts in the jail. And what I learned just the other day is many of my suicide attempts are to get drugs back in their system. They'll throw themselves--

S1: 27:38

Can I interrupt and say that my comment is more of when you have officers that are substance abusers, that them themselves have mental health issues and that they have made or have regular interactions with communities that are not upholding the values, what are your recommendations for that?

S2: 27:57

Okay. So I'm sorry. I misunderstood.

S5: 27:59

That's okay.

S2: 27:59

So you're talking about

S5: 28:00

[just?] clarify.

S2: 28:00

Employees of mine who are having substance abuse issues--

S5: 28:06

And let me just say-- because I'm trying to listen to both sides, and I think I'm very clear on what your recommendations for what we need to do for when community

come to the table with those issues. What I want to walk away with [are?], what are your recommendations that we should do for those in the force that have those issues.

- S2: 28:21 If I'm made aware of those issues, I will do whatever's in my power to get them into treatment and get help. Currently, what exists in the peer support world-- and chiefs and sheriffs can chime in. I am not aware of who is using the peer support program because there's stigma associated with seeking help. "We're tough, we can figure this out. Swallow it, dude. You can handle this." That's the culture of law enforcement. The more we get younger folk into the system into law enforcement positions where that's not so stigmatized anymore, you're starting to see people that aren't afraid to get counselling, aren't afraid to say, "I could use some help. Going to that explosion last week, where the guy's skin was falling off, that's affected me. I can't sleep anymore." And they're starting to actually get more help. So, I will do everything in my power to get people the help they need.
- S5: 29:26 But no specific recommendations [for?] [inaudible]?
- S2: 29:30 Well, your specific employee assistance program that's available to the law enforcement unit and where they work.
- S1: 29:45 Thank you both for your [inaudible]. My question is around-- and I'm sorry, I don't know who brought it up earlier. About [inaudible] and money that the legislators put aside for training. Can you speak to specifically what your departments have done with the increase in money for training and any other observations in law enforcement that you've seen since then?
- S3: 30:13 Sure. Money always helps. Local governments are perpetually cutting budgets. And in my eight years of chief, I've never [said?] down in a budget process, A, that I got everything that I wanted or B, that I wasn't squeezing every single nickel. So frankly, thank goodness for the change in the state aid to help pay for additional training. [SIT?] training, as the sheriff mentioned, actually is extremely expensive training. And if you don't have the money to pay for it, you don't have the money to pay for it. So it's great that that money exists and that all of our extra money was invested in-- frankly, well, I should say most of it is invested in mental health treatment and crisis intervention just because those classes were, like I said, expensive.
- S2: 31:01 [It's?] to chair members, same thing. Minnesota CAT training, almost every deputy in the sheriff's office now has had it. We have 83 deputies. I think we're at the 15 to go. And we've started in the jail too, giving them that training as well. My question really was, is there a saturation point? Like chief [inaudible] was saying, the mental health practitioners, the psychologist, the psychiatrists, the psychiatric nurses are calling for the police to come and help in a mental health institution. And we've got 40 hours of training. 40 hours is probably not enough. We can probably keep doing that. There's probably more that we need to know. I'm not sure we need to get to the point where we have psychology certificates or anything. But I don't think you reach a saturation point after 40.
- S6: 31:59 I've just got a few questions [inaudible] [thanks to chief?] for elevating the issue of [inaudible]. So, I've got a couple questions specifically about [inaudible] department. And so you [all do?] have [inaudible] officers, right?
- S2: 32:16 We do. Yes, sir.
- S6: 32:17 [inaudible]. So my question's kind of about [the?] co-responding program. Do you have a co-responding program?

S2: 32:25 Well, we're working on that with-- Anoka County Adult Mental Health is-- we're inviting them to the table to respond with us because we believe there's value to it. And again, it's always government on a limited budget, but that would be outstanding. Frankly, it's easier in a suburb to talk about making that happen. The part that I worry about is, say, greater Minnesota. That will have nowhere near the resources to be able to pull that off. That said, I think that's a really important avenue to explore, just to have that level of expertise, even if you could just have access to somebody to talk to on the phone at 3:00 AM when you're dealing with an incident because our training has changed a lot. Let me rephrase that; our response has changed a lot in the 25 years that I've been involved, where stop and wait and take advantage of the time that you're given wasn't necessarily the case 25 years ago. So we're pretty good at taking a moment to truly assess a situation. It would be the time that maybe a mental health professional could be somehow contacted or brought in or assessed [inaudible] Skype. So for instance, as we talk about some of these topics, mental health or people in mental health crises, is that psychiatrists are in such high demand that working with a patient has become normal. It's apparently become ordinary, and that might be something that we might be able to leverage technology to have somebody, say, some stand-alone someone, somewhere, who maybe could be anywhere. An incident could happen anywhere, and then that person's expertise could be brought to bear, because it's very frustrating when you're an officer and you're standing and you know somebody's in a crisis but you just can't figure out what to do. You're stuck, and then sometimes people force your hand and then you react, and we want officers to pause, we want officers to think, we want them to evaluate options. But that's a really interesting trail that we need to explore. I think that your recommendation also would be a big deal related to that.

S6: 34:30 Okay. [Yeah?], [certainly?] [inaudible]. And the reason I [inaudible] [questions?]. [I got three more?] [inaudible].

S2: 34:38 All right, [crosstalk].

S6: 34:41 It's a big issue right here. It's a lot of [inaudible] [kind of losing a lot of?]- some of our [residents and officers involved in crises?]. Lost my train of thought there. So kind of along the line of the co-responding program-- [inaudible] [go back to?] [inaudible].

S4: 35:18 [inaudible], we'll come back to you.

S6: 35:20 [inaudible] that's what I'm going to say. And even in the rural parts of Minnesota, [even in?] Minneapolis, we have a co-responding program that-- we had to have discussions, but even our goal is about how to best utilize those assets, and I think we just recognize that it's becoming more and more critical that we really look at allocating resources towards having other trained personnel respond. One of the questions that I had is whether or not-- I know that in 2009, lawmakers authorized 911 to be linked with mental health hotlines, and so there could be an intervention right there, and then there was a report that came up that many of our municipalities aren't-- or haven't had an opportunity to really take advantage of that. What do you have to say about that, linking 911 with mental health crisis intervention?

S2: 36:40 I think that most-- well, the bulk of that program, I think, is geared towards helping people that aren't necessarily in crisis, meaning they're having a mental health incident. Frankly, most of the mental health calls for service that we respond to wind up just to be a counseling session with an officer, and the officer leaves. It's not often that they wind up having some sort of intervention where it's a forced ride to the hospital, for instance. So what we do is just give people access to the resource by giving them a card with the phone number on it for making that connection, which is

different than the people [are in?] crisis, where they need to go to the hospital for immediate intervention.

- S6: 37:19 I guess I was kind of thinking more in terms of triggering that co-responder opportunity close to the front end of when the call is coming in to [inaudible] [period of?] when a co-responder's triggered [inaudible].
- S2: 37:35 I'm sure other agencies are probably farther down that trail than I am, and I don't know that I'm a subject matter expert on that, but it's a really interesting conversation because yes, speeding up that process will be a big deal too.
- S4: 37:48 [inaudible].
- S7: 37:50 Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I think right on, what you've been talking about. My question originally has changed tremendously because you've answered most the questions, but the co-responder suggestion you're making, we're doing, and we've been doing that for-- it's probably three years now in Olmsted County and Rochester. We took a mental health crisis worker out of our jail, which is going to lead to my question, what your agency is doing in jail, but we've been doing that, and we've been doing it very regularly between us and the cooperation with Rochester Police Department. With that, then, Chief Wise, your comments in regards to hospital, school, or group home requests, 911 calls, is, again, not unique to the metro. It's happening in my point of the county-- or the state. In the smaller counties, it's the same situation, and we're responding in the same way. The legislature had a conversation with [Senator?] [inaudible], and today, we have the money that was pushed forward - 30 million, I believe it was - in one of their more recent sessions - I believe it was last year - and we're moving forward with our crisis center in Rochester as we speak. [inaudible], I've seen the first plans. So we're making those steps, but mental health is a big issue. So the question I have for you, Sheriff, is, in your detention center, are you, and are you familiar with other agencies that are doing something along the same lines with programs and mental health support in the facilities?
- S8: 39:32 Mr. Chair, Sheriff Torgerson. We have a mental health practitioner in the jail. Hannah [Perty?] is a forensic psychologist; she has her master's degree in that. We've had her for two years. She does the follow-ups, so she is the go-to for all the jail when someone is starting to exhibit behaviors that we think might indicate they're in crisis, and she has a regular tour that she goes on every day and meets with individuals. She is kind of the backstop on medications. Do you really need that medication or don't you? She has kind of that, she can sift through that issue because a lot of these folks, of course, addicted and they want to get access to some medications that may be inappropriate. I'm not sure what other jails are doing if they're doing it to that level. But, ours is a holistic approach to mental health. And it's very, very important to us and we have never been rebuffed at the County Board level with funding.
- S2: 40:39 But I think the recommendation for looking for recommendations would be that we try to find that way to embedding social workers, crisis workers with every agency is a huge lift. There's no question about that but we'd probably run out of that resource very quickly because there's not a lot of people going into that profession either. So we need to find a way to merge these ideas, these situations, and get the support that's out there. I'm hopeful the crisis centers are going to be a step in that right direction but we'll see where it goes at this point. But we're doing a lot in mental health across the state. And it's not just in the metro, it's out state as well but there's a lot more support that's needed to be done. There's no question about it.

S9: 41:33

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Gentleman, thank you very much for your perspectives. I know you speak for all of my law enforcement leaders in St. Louis County, they echo your sentiments that you've shared with us today. I'm so glad you brought up the Critical Incident Training, the CIT. A lot of people aren't aware of that and if there's anybody on this group here that is not, I would like to have you in maybe a minute or two, just say what that is because if we're looking for specific recommendations, please let this group know that this is all local funding. Law enforcement agencies have to beg through grants. I use my forfeiture fund sometime to help fund these trainings, but there is no state money behind this to my knowledge. And that might be an excellent thing that we could bring forward as far as a specific recommendation, so I'd like to ask you to address that? An example of one that I'll share before Chief takes over. Deputy Jim O'Meara was on patrol and received a call for a service six miles south of Hastings. If anybody's been six miles south of Hastings, there's not much there other than cornfields unless you're going to King's to get a hamburger. Black male, walking in the traffic lane, waving his arms back and forth. This was at 8:00 in the morning, so people are on their way to work either to Hastings or to the Twin Cities. Deputy O'Meara, who's a graduate of the 40-hour CIT training program, gets there first and encounters the gentleman. The gentleman says, "You don't need to be here. I don't need your help, my Uber's on the way." And the next line of the deputy's report is, "I did not see a phone in his hand or an earpiece in his ear." So, he claimed he was talking to Uber when he was not. He was clearly in crisis. Jim was able to talk him into the squad car, get him to the region's hospital, and everything was just as it should be. Five years ago, this might have been tasers and handcuffs. I don't say that off the cuff, but it's working. I'm seeing it. I can't tell you every story but it's happening. I've got old dogs that are learning new tricks and it's helping. So, I think this is a key. I know it's early, it's anecdotal, but my sense is it's working.

S2: 43:57

Yeah. I can [inaudible] is that the essence of a lot of this training is to be able to have young officers be experienced officers as quickly as possible. So, I first started in the '90s. We had an old-timer who had the gift of gab because he learned it because he didn't want to be involved in physical confrontations, nobody does. And he got good at deescalating. SIT training is a way to accelerate the process of getting somebody who's 24 years old with limited life experience to be able to intervene in something like that, but it used to be what-- veterans just did that stuff because they learned over time through trial and error. We can't afford to have people learn through trial and error anymore. They have to learn how to do that sort of stuff. And literally, it's just verbal judo, are just using words and actions to try to calm people down and SIT training focuses on roleplaying, understanding what different sorts of mental illness and focus on roleplaying, because it does make a difference. And like I said, it helps the 22-year-old to have some experience to be able to deal with some of this stuff.

S4: 45:07

[inaudible].

S10: 45:08

Thank you, Chair. I'll be very quick here. I want to first thank Sheriff [Leslie?]. Chief Wise, thank you for comments and your service. I appreciate that. Just two quick perspectives. So, one, I want to bring it back to Chair Alisson's comments regarding the Minnesota Supreme Court decision recently, in arbitration. If you can imagine the conversations we had earlier with our county attorneys where they have foregone the grand jury so that they could be ultimately the decision-makers and be very transparent to our communities when they have to make those tough decisions. We as chiefs of police and sheriffs feel the same way. When we have to make that ultimate decision in disciplining an employee, yet the arbitrator remains anonymous for the most part, in our communities. And so that, I believe, is really problematic for us because ultimately, we're the ones who have to go before communities and try to

explain why that employee - who we believed should no longer serve and wear that badge - why they're still a part of our departments. So that was just one piece. The other thing I wanted to go is aimed at Committee Member Chanda Baker Smith. One of the things that we can do in terms of the mental wellness piece is, many departments, including mine, the first and last time that an employee is going to have that assessment from a psychologist is at pre-employment. I'll be on 30 years of working, that was the last time I had mine done. We know that we will experience trauma and certain levels of depression throughout this career. Doesn't mean that we're defective. We have to have coping mechanisms to manage that. I believe there is one police-- I think maybe West Saint Paul just recently enacted a mandatory yearly wellness check-in. It is not punitive, that should be from chiefs on down to the most newly hired recruit should be doing that. I think that that would be helpful as well, to have that yearly. So those are just my comments, Chair. Thank you.

S4: 47:03

[inaudible].

S11: 47:07

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a lot of things, I think. The chief referred to old-timers, I think I'm one of them [laughter]. I started in law enforcement in the '70s and I could tell you where we were and where we've come from then is amazing. We being those in law enforcement and the professionalism that there is out there now that I see. There were some comments earlier about the qualifications for law enforcement. Minnesota, I know - and I don't have to ask - I know that to be qualified to carry a license in Minnesota to practice law enforcement we have the highest standard in the country. And we have had for a long time and so it isn't just, "We're going to strap a gun on somebody preferably a big guy and put them out there and have him do our police work. These people are very well trained. Maybe those that you talk about the kind of training with mental illness, and if I would have been sitting here 20 years ago and listening to this, I would have said, "You're all way off base, this isn't happening." We would never, never had to deal with that. The biggest call that we got when we were in the sheriff's department was yes, we do have somebody that has mental illness, come here and transported. And that's exactly all we ever did, unless we, of course, approached somebody at the door or on the street, as the sheriff talked about. But nothing like there is now, nothing like there is now. So, are we dealing with the right problems here when we talk about all the drug abuse, and we talk about all this and what these officers are having to come up against? Real quickly, Sheriff, you talked about training and somebody else also mentioned that why not get out of the car and get into those communities? That really is what police work used to be all about. That was our community policing. Those that are old enough in this room to remember community policing was that you got on the squad car, you got out on a corner and you talked to those kids, befriend them so they'll give you information. What kind of field training officers or what's the timeframe of FTOs that you do now? I don't know if everybody knows that. But I think every department in the state now has an FTO time. And just how long is that? And again, we're struggling and stapling for reasons as to what how we can help law enforcement, but I think the public needs to know just well how well trained and how what professional they are, and ,heriff and Chief you both explained it very well. I appreciate it. But what is your FTO program about?

S2: 50:02

Senator, ours is 16 weeks. So. the deputy would be hired, go through a couple of week orientation. We don't have an academy. The guy that's in the-- we just hired five and one that's in the FTO program is a Graduate University of St. Thomas. Has his bachelor's degree. Played baseball there. He taught-- we swore him in on Friday. We actually technically swore him in a month ago, but the family event was on Friday. And he turned to his mother and said, "This is really hard. I'm learning a lot of stuff, the way we do business and things like that, the calls for service coming in, the

geography, the multitasking that goes on, to back each other up and to take care of the customer service from the community." So 16 weeks, it's a gradual handing off of the reins, as they get more and more comfortable. The first two weeks is watch me kid, and then the eventually just start. Pretty soon they get handed the keys and they're driving. Then they get the radio. That's that gradual evolution. And that's what our program is. And then the last phase is they're on their own, still being evaluated. Well, no, then at the end of that, then they get there on their own. And we're still being evaluated but from afar. They're actually out there on their own by themselves. And then they have the evaluation still goes on.

- S3: 51:29 Our training program and it's the same. It's a four-month field training process, and to take the training wheels off and it is a completely different job now than it was 25 years ago because I'll tell you that we used to tell people the hardest part of the job was geography. That's what used to say back in the old days, figuring out where to go. That's nothing now. Everything else is more complicated and challenging than that. So, it's different. But we're working hard and we're-- and the most important part is again try to get that young new officer to be seasoned as quickly as we can and that's through training. And we try to avoid the school of hard knocks as much as we can.
- S9: 52:09 And chief, you remember, our verbal tool was the best tool we had on our belt. Way better than any taser.
- S4: 52:18 [crosstalk] was that one time we were on a public [inaudible] [laughter] the panel this time. And we're going to take a short [inaudible].
- S5: 52:30 I have just one quick--
- S5: 52:31 --question on trainings. I was reviewing the comments that we received from the community and a part of what they talked about was anti-racism and anti-oppression training and mentioned race quite a few times. Are there some narrowly-tailored approaches or things that we should be thinking about as it relates to training? And it's on my mind as well because I've been recently reading this book called Bias by a MacArthur fellow. And the example that stood out there was a police officer, who was African American, thought he was chasing a suspect, and he was chasing his own shadow in the window and going across the mirror. And the reason why I bring this up is [an attorney?] does trainings around diversion and inclusion, bias plays a key role. And we know from the Race Bias Task Force and other work that we've done throughout their judicial system that it's something that we cannot miss. So I'm just curious if there are best practices or things that we should be thinking about related to training in that area as well.
- S8: 53:25 Yes, ma'am. Great question. Yeah, we do training on implicit bias. Frankly, it's not enough. To be honest, I think another opportunity would be to explore the idea of bias, especially as young people are beginning to pursue the career of law enforcement, that there are multiple layers to try to weed people out. Because nobody's going to volunteer their bias before they get hired. If they're showing up with a bias, they're going to hide it as best they can. And that would be helpful to weed it out because we do whatever our mandated training-- we do our implicit bias. We have a policy related to implicit bias that we do fair and impartial policing. But I think there'd be a real opportunity to explore, law enforcement students, the psychology of them. Why they're there, why they're interested in the profession in the first place, and that sort of thing could be done, I think. It could be an intervention that could be done for a prospective candidate that I think anybody can agree to.
- S4: 54:29 [inaudible].

S2: 54:31 Yeah. We actually sent Assistant Commissioner Booker Hodges to some bias training. He did some work with our office when he was a member there. We since trained two additional persons on bias training. They're both involved. We have Deputy Leondo Henry attending the YMCA's Inclusivity and Diversity Training Program. I think it's a six-month program. It's kind of like I think what Wilder used to do with some strategic management leadership training. We're sending him as well. So we're constantly looking at angles, coming at it from different angles, and challenging our people to think. And I think someone was testifying earlier, "Make us uncomfortable." That's okay. We're constantly looking at that.

S3: 55:18 Do you mind if I throw in 30 seconds more? Have any of you done or seen-- Harvard has an online bias survey that you can do, and I heard of this. So a couple of years ago-- so I'm going to make it a mission myself. I know what the survey is about. I am an educated person. I'm a law enforcement person. And I'm going to do this and I will know exactly what this thing is all about. I went through this and lo and behold, discovered that I have biases. And I was angry at myself and wondered where it was and how those biases come out. I think in the end, the whole point of that Harvard study was to examine the idea that everybody has biases and they need to have some awareness of that. You have to be conscious of what your biases are so that you don't let them interfere with the work that you're tasked to do. But it was a very interesting thing. I think was like 30 minutes maybe total, but it's very interesting research topic.

S4: 56:20 [inaudible] [crosstalk].

S3: 56:33 No, it's online.

S2: 56:34 It's online?

S3: 56:34 Yeah, I guarantee it's worth doing.