

Minnesota Working Group on Police-Involved Deadly Force Encounters
Public Hearing 2: Prevention, Training and Officer Wellness
Saturday, Sept. 28, 2019
10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Minnesota State University at Mankato

The Minnesota Working Group on Police-Involved Deadly Force Encounters was organized by co-chairs Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and Commissioner of Public Safety John Harrington to explore strategies to address growing public concern about the loss of life during deadly force encounters in Minnesota. The working group will provide a framework for stakeholders statewide to have a voice in developing recommendations which may include policy, procedure, legislation, programming and training.

The goal is to identify meaningful actions that can be taken to reduce loss of life and improve police and community relationships, safety and wellbeing. Members of the working group are a cross section of law enforcement and diverse community representatives, including families impacted by deadly-force encounters. The working group will hold four public hearings, including public comment and a series of community listening sessions, and they shall accept testimony or information submitted online from the public through the MN DPS website at: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/co/working-group/Pages/default.aspx>. The working group will produce a report in February 2020 with recommendations to address prevention, policy and law, training, investigations and accountability, community healing, and officer wellness.

On Saturday, Sept. 28, 2019, the Working Group on Police-Involved Deadly Force Encounters, co-chaired by Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and Commissioner of Public Safety John Harrington, hosted the second public hearing, titled Prevention, Training and Officer Wellness, at Minnesota State University at Mankato.

The working group convened at 10:30 a.m. with a panel on Officer Wellness led by Sean Smoot of 21st Century Policing Solutions (21CP Solutions), who reported on the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Report to Congress and eleven case studies on best practices in officer wellness to improve officer mental health and resilience and ability to respond as trained under stressful situations. He was followed by Chief Mike Goldstein, who is also director of public safety for the City of Plymouth. Chief Goldstein spoke to the importance of addressing the stress of the job and cumulative exposure to trauma that results in negative health outcomes for officers through intentional mental health and wellness strategies.

The second panel focused on Prevention and Training, with testimony by Jillian Nelson and Elie Wilson of the Autism Society of Minnesota and Steve Wickelgren, CIT Officer Association of Minnesota. Nelson addressed the disproportionate impact of police-involved deadly force encounters. As many as 50 percent involve people with mental health or disabilities, raising concerns about the training of officers to recognize mental health and disabilities and the protocols for response. Wickelgren spoke about crisis intervention training (CIT) to better equip officers to recognize and respond to mental health situations.

The third panel was anchored by Capt. Kevin Lutz of the Camden County Police Department, who described a national best practice in reducing police-involved deadly force encounters. Over the last six years, the CCPD has reduced officer-involved shootings from 65 to one per year through a number of policy changes, training, and protocols, beginning with a focus on

sanctity of life and integrated communication, assessment and tactics protocols (ICAT) that help officers slow things down, back off, and reduce officer-created jeopardy situations. Copies of their training and protocols are provided in the resources on the working group website.

The final presenter was again Drew Evans, superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), who described the investigative process that the BCA uses for police-involved deadly force cases.

Invited testimony of affected families was provided by several family members who detailed their concerns about the causes of deadly force encounters, lack of emphasis on community well-being and resources for the families of those killed by police, and concerns about BCA investigations.

The hearing was closed by the co-chairs. All proceedings were live-streamed, recorded on video, and posted to the working group website.