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**Subject:** Wellness Week - Monday March 25

Today is the beginning of First Responder Wellness Week for 2024 and the Resiliency and Wellness Unit wanted to start by addressing the most critical dimension related to our quality of life and our life expectancy – **HEART HEALTH**.

**Heart Disease is the leading cause of death year after year in the United States.** Part of the reason is due to genetics/family history, but the other contributing factor is our lifestyle/environment. Genetics are not our destiny. By being proactive about our healthy lifestyle habits, we can reduce or even prevent heart related conditions that can diminish our health, cause serious heart events, or lead to death.

Two of the single most important things you can do to enhance your health and avoid a heart event is to; 1. Know you family history and 2. Know your numbers.

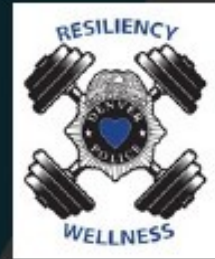
Heart disease commonly runs in families and has a genetic component. If you have someone close to you that has has a heart related event, this is crucial information to talk to your doctor about. Schedule a complete physical with blood work to look for inflammatory markers that can contribute to heart disease such as LP-PLA2 and Oxidized LDL. All of your numbers matter to include, but are not limited to; Blood Pressure, Total Cholesterol, Blood Sugar, Insulin Levels, Triglycerides, and C-Reactive Proteins. Your doctor will evaluate and assess your Heart Health Risk and determine if more testing is required from a Cardiologist to look for the presence of plaque build up in the walls of your arteries that can lead to a Heart Attack or Stroke. Some types of diagnostic testing include, but are not exclusive to others are; Stress Test, Ultrasound/Carotid artery test, ECG (Electrocardiogram), Echocardiogram, Angiogram, MRI, Calcium Score Test, and Heart CT Scan.

We must micromanage our Heart Health and be disciplined in creating Healthy Lifestyle Habits to reduce the impact of the stress and strains of life, and of an occupation with an exposure to effects of shift work, fatigue, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, stress, critical incidents, and traumatic events. We must work just as hard at our Self Care as we do at our jobs. In order to THRIVE, we must prioritize Optimal Sleep, Healthy Nutrition, Consistent Exercise, Stress Management, and supportive Social Connection.

**With the average age of a Heart related event for officers being just 46 years old and a reduced life expectancy by approximately 22 years,** we must have a CALL TO ACTION to prioritize our TOTAL HEALTH physically, mentally, and emotionally to counterbalance the negative effects of life and work to extend our life expectancy and live our best, happiest, healthiest, strongest, most resilient versions of ourselves so we do not fall victim to the averages because if we are Law Enforcement Officers, we are NOT average. We are selfless servants that go into harms way to help protect and save strangers. You owe it to yourself, your friends, and your family to save and protect your own life, BOTH, physically and psychologically!! You would give up your life to save a stranger in need, so you MUST dedicate to saving your OWN life!! Please!!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S.

## Prioritize your Heart Health: A Vital Message for First Responders



### Cardiovascular Risks to First Responders

- **65** is the average age of civilians with first heart attack, **46** for officers (1)
- **79** - life expectancy for civilians, **57** for officers (1)
- **7%** - heart attacks under age 45 for civilians, **45%** for officers (1)

### Factors Contributing to Heart Disease Unique to First Responders

- High stress levels
- Irregular shift work
- Physical demands
- Challenging to prioritize health habits

## Importance of Early Detection

The research is clear - the risk of cardiovascular disease to first responders is too high to ignore.

- Risk of sudden cardiac death increases by 18 times when first responders reach the age of 45, even higher with hypertension and smoking.(1)
- Over 90% of officers who are at high risk for heart attack are missed by traditional screenings (2)
- 92% of officers tested positive for pre-clinical heart disease - 24% of these were less than 40 years old (2)
- 18 - number of monthly pension payments to an officer upon retirement prior to death(3)

**Take the first step towards a healthier heart today - Reduce your risk of heart disease and continue to serve your communities.**

- Advocate for your health
- Understand your heart health indicators
- Get early cardiovascular screening

(1) John M. Violanti, Tara A. Hartley, et al., "Life Expectancy in Police Officers: A Comparison with the U.S. General Population," International Journal of Emergency Mental Health 15, no. 4 (2010): 217-28.

(2) Sheinberg et al., "Liposomal Associated Phospholipase A2 is More Effective in Predicting Cardiac Risk in Law Enforcement Than Framingham Risk Score and Coronary Artery Calcium Score Calculation". JOEM, PAP Jan 2, 2024.

(3) 2019 Society of Actuaries.

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