

**Cop 2 Cop - the 24-hour
Confidential Hotline for New
Jersey Law Enforcement
Officers and their families**

**Cop 2 Cop - Answering the Call
1-866-Cop-2Cop**

About the Cop 2 Cop Program

Cop 2 Cop is the first program of its kind in the country, enacted into law to focus on suicide prevention and mental health support for law enforcement officers. After a series of police suicides (1996-1998), community leaders in New Jersey believed that law enforcement professionals needed a **confidential, safe outlet where they could talk to peers who could understand, offer support and not be judgmental.**

In 1999, N.J.S.A., 11 A:2-25, Assembly Bill 1801 was signed into law creating the Cop 2 Cop program. The hotline began accepting calls in November 2000. Cop 2 Cop is a program funded by a grant from the New Jersey State Department of Personnel and presented by UMDNJ/University Behavioral HealthCare.

This New Jersey law has helped Cop 2 Cop become an essential program for law enforcement officers, **helping to avert over 156 suicides since its inception.** Though statistics have not been compiled nationally, most law enforcement experts believe the police suicide rate is higher than those of the general population, but because suicides among police officers are often reported as accidents or met with official silence, definitive numbers are hard to come by.

Consider these facts:

- The national suicide rate for the general population is 11/100,000 and for police officers it is approximately 18/100,000
- In New Jersey suicide rates have averaged 6.5/100,000 over the past 10 years in comparison with the national police suicide rate of 18/100,000
- Police officers are eight times more likely to commit suicide than to be killed in the line of duty

Cop 2 Cop – Answering the Call for Help

After the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, Cop 2 Cop played an instrumental role in providing mental health services to a number of area law enforcement agencies. In addition, due to the magnitude of the 9/11 crisis, then Acting Governor DiFrancesco expanded Cop 2 Cop's services to include all NJ Firefighters and EMS. Since the hotline started, Cop 2 Cop has:

- Handled over **23,000 calls to the hotline**
- Trained over **10,000 individuals**
- Provided over **625 Critical Incident Stress Management sessions**
- Prevented over **156 Suicides**

Among the support services provided in response to the 9/11 attack, Cop 2 Cop provided:

- of over 625 Critical Incident Stress Management Response Services
- direct contact with over 1900 rescuers directly involved with 9/11
- training, trauma support, PTSD and other mental health services to the Urban Search and Rescue- New Jersey Task Force 1 (USAR-NJTF 1), Port Authority Police Department (PAPD), New York Police Department (NYPD) and the Top-10 New Jersey Police Departments who responded to the disaster

Cop 2 Cop is the confidential hotline for New Jersey Law Enforcement Officers offering 24-hour/7-day a week from colleagues who understand and can offer support to handle your immediate needs.

Cop 2 Cop Services

The Cop 2 Cop hotline, 1-866-COP-2-COP, is staffed by retired officers who are licensed Clinical Social Workers, known as Cop Clinicians, and specially trained Mental Health professionals, along with volunteer retired officers who are trained as peer supporters.

Services include:

- **Peer and Clinical Support** services provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week **by law enforcement professionals, psychologists/social workers and retired law enforcement volunteers** who are trained to work on the hotline as peer supporters.
- **Clinical Assessments are available for mild or severe problems and are determined by an** experienced professional counselor, who can recommend additional treatment and follow-up with a vast network of professional resources throughout the state. For situations where a client is not sure how to handle a problem, or a custom designed clinical assessment may be necessary, the Cop 2 Cop hotline staff will discuss the situation with a trained professional in the field of police psychology.
- **Referrals** – to one of our Police Clinical Network Providers trained to treat the unique needs of officers and their families. Treatment and services are provided to help with family therapy, medication for depression, detoxification, or anything required for a healthy return to work
- **Critical Incident Stress Management** – when an officer is involved in a traumatic incident of any kind, the experience may be haunting for some time. Cop 2 Cop provides professional debriefing services and can dispatch a team to assist with the situation. The service is designed to help those involved talk about what happened; understand what to expect and to help identify if any symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder exist and require treatment. The de-briefing methods used follow the International Guidelines established by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF)

Cop 2 Cop maintaining confidentiality while ensuring the safety of all involved

About Law Enforcement Stress and Suicide

Obtaining information on suicide from police sources is difficult. Suicide is not openly discussed by police personnel; officers tend to view suicide as dishonorable to the office and profession. Department statistics on police suicide are rare, and police agencies are sometimes reluctant to allow researchers access to existing data. (*Police Suicide, Epidemic in Blue, John Violanti, Ph.D*)

When retired officers who volunteer on the Cop 2 Cop hotline recount their first hand accounts of their most memorable critical incident on the job, they use words like: 'horrified', 'remorse', 'guilt', 'flashbacks', 'fear', 'anger', 'guilt'.

(*Police Suicide: Tactics for Prevention, Dell Hackett and John Violanti, Ph.D.*)

Statistics obtained from several of the nation's larger law enforcement agencies presents a conclusive case for providing assistance for law enforcement professionals:

New York City PD (1985-1998)

Suicides - 87

Line of duty deaths - 36

Chicago PD (1990-1998)

Suicides 22

Line of duty deaths – 12

FBI, (1993-1998)

Suicides – 18

Line of duty deaths – 4

Los Angeles PD (1990-1998)

Suicides 20

Line of duty deaths 11

San Diego PD (1992-1998)

Suicides -5

Line of duty deaths – 0

Case Examples

(Excerpts from New York Times Article, 2/24/02)

“When you become a cop, you live two lives,” said Nicholas C. Recanati, a retired member of the Bergen County Police Department. “You don’t want to go home and talk about the ugliness you’ve seen. Why bring that into your family life? So you try to ignore it and compartmentalize things. And then your signals get crossed and all of a sudden you’re yelling at your wife or our kids and you don’t know why.”

Officer Recanati narrowly escaped being killed when a murder suspect shot at him at point blank range using an assault rifle. The bullet grazed his head and he fell backward, shot and killed the suspect. After a few days off, he returned to work, and that’s when he says the problems started. He began to lose his temper more easily. He was quick to take risks and out-of-the-ordinary behavior could cause him to panic. *“I was cracking, I was cracking”*, said Officer Recanati, who was a member of the bomb squad as well as an investigator at the medical examiner’s office. *“The shooting, the stress of daily life, playing with bombs all day, seeing an average of a body a day - I was starting to tilt”*. Then, at the urging of a friend, he called Cop2Cop and within hours was on the phone with three different doctors and began to undergo counseling. “It saved my life” he said.

As stated in the book *Police Suicide: Tactics for Prevention*, ***‘The prevention of suicide requires a stronger support system. To the police officer, no one is better qualified to understand ‘the job’ more than another police officer. Peer support programs seem to work well for suicide intervention.’***

About the Partnership

Cop 2 Cop is a partnership program of the New Jersey State Department of Personnel and UMDNJ/University Behavioral HealthCare.

The New Jersey Department of Personnel was created in 1986 to replace the Department of Civil Service. The Department of Personnel (DOP) acts in both a service and regulatory capacity. The DOP is headed by Acting Commissioner Rolando Torres, Jr.

UMDNJ/University Behavioral HealthCare (UBHC) is one of the largest providers of behavioral healthcare providers in the country with over 30 locations across New Jersey. UBHC is headed by Christopher Kosseff, President and CEO

Accomplishments

The Cop 2 Cop program serves high risk officers across New Jersey with a variety of programs in response to crisis situations, including:

- **Stress management** psycho educational sessions
- **De-fusing and de-briefings** in response to critical incidents
- **QPR** (Question, Persuade, Refer) training
- **Approval of Senate Bill S1374 - the Blue Heart Law**, which allocates funding to **create a wounded officers support group to provide counseling support for wounded law enforcement officers**

Awards and Endorsements

The Cop 2 Cop program has been the recipient of many awards and has received recognition for excellence by several agencies, including:

- **World Congress Award, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, February 2003**
- **Certified by the American Association of Suicidology, 2002**
- **The New Jersey Governor's Excellence Award from the State Office of Volunteerism, 2003**
- **New Jersey Attorney General's Recognition Award, 2001**
- **New Jersey Governor's Proclamation, December, 2001**

Media Attention

- **New York Times Feature Article, "Tough Guy to Tough Guy", February, 2002**
- Interview for FEMA media while at the **ICISF World Congress, 2003**
- **Caucus New Jersey** – Steve Adubato Show
- **NJN News Interview**
- **WMBC News Interview**
- **Star Ledger feature profile**
- **Catholic Advocate**
- **Quarterly Column FOP News**

[Second Reprint]
ASSEMBLY, No. 1801

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
208th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 9, 1998

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CLARE M. FARRAGHER

District 12 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman STEVE CORODEMUS

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblyman Blee, Assemblywoman Heck, Assemblyman Thompson, Senators
Kyrillos, Robertson, Rice and Allen**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the Senate on September 28, 1998.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/24/1998)

An Act establishing a toll-free "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline, supplementing Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes ¹and amending ²[N.J.S.26:64-6¹] R.S.39:5-41².

Be It Enacted *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. (New section) a. The Commissioner of Personnel shall establish and maintain, on a 24-hour daily basis, a toll-free information "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline. The hotline shall receive and respond to calls from law enforcement officers and sheriff's officers who have been involved in any event or incident which has produced personal or job-related depression, anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma, or disorder for the officer. The operators of the hotline shall seek to identify those officers who should be referred to further debriefing and counseling services, and to provide such referrals.

b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the commissioner and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be persons, who by experience or education, are: (1) familiar with post trauma disorders and the emotional and psychological tensions, depressions, and anxieties unique to law enforcement officers and sheriff's officers; or (2) trained to

provide counseling services involving marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress management and other emotional or psychological disorders or conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the personal and professional well-being of a law enforcement officer and a sheriff's officer.

c. To ensure the integrity of the telephone hotline and to encourage officers to utilize it, the commissioner shall provide for the confidentiality of the names of the officers calling, the information discussed by that officer and the operator, and any referrals for further debriefing or counseling; provided, however, the commissioner may, by rule and regulation, establish guidelines providing for the tracking of any officer who exhibits a severe emotional or psychological disorder or condition which the operator handling the call reasonably believes might result in harm to the officer or others.

2. (New section) The commissioner shall prepare a list of appropriately licensed or certified psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers; other appropriately trained and qualified counselors; and experienced former law enforcement officers who are willing to accept referrals and to participate in the debriefing and counseling offered law enforcement officers and sheriff's officers under the provisions of this act.

3. (New section) In establishing the hotline authorized under the provisions of section 1 of this act, the commissioner shall consult with a representative from the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police; a State representative from the New Jersey State Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, Fraternal Order of Police, the New Jersey Corrections Officers Association, and any other exclusive bargaining representative for a law enforcement agency; and such others as the commissioner may deem appropriate.

²[¹4. N.J.S.2C:64-6 is amended to read as follows:

2C:64-6. Disposal of Forfeited Property. a. Property which has been forfeited shall be destroyed if it can serve no lawful purpose or it presents a danger to the public health, safety or welfare. All other forfeited property or any proceeds resulting from the forfeiture and all money seized pursuant to this chapter shall become the property of the entity funding the prosecuting agency involved and shall be disposed of, distributed, appropriated and used in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

The prosecutor or the Attorney General, whichever is prosecuting the case, shall divide the forfeited property, any proceeds resulting from the forfeiture or any money seized pursuant to this chapter with any other entity where the other entity's law enforcement agency participated in the surveillance, investigation, arrest or prosecution resulting in the forfeiture, in proportion to the other entity's contribution to the surveillance, investigation, arrest or prosecution resulting in the forfeiture, as determined in the

discretion of the prosecutor or the Attorney General, whichever is prosecuting the case. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, such forfeited property and proceeds shall be used solely for law enforcement purposes, and shall be designated for the exclusive use of the law enforcement agency which contributed to the surveillance, investigation, arrest or prosecution resulting in the forfeiture.

The Attorney General is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to implement and enforce the provisions of this act.

b. For a period of two years from the date of enactment of P.L.1993, c.227 (C.26:4-100.13 et al.), 10% of the proceeds obtained by the Attorney General under the provisions of subsection a. of this section shall be deposited into the Hepatitis Inoculation Fund established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1993, c.227 (C.26:4-100.13). c. Beginning two years from the date of enactment of P.L.1993, c.227 (C.26:4-100.13 et al.) and in subsequent years, 5% of the proceeds obtained by the Attorney General under the provisions of subsection a. of this section shall be deposited into the Hepatitis Inoculation Fund established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1993, c.227 (C.26:4-100.13).

d. The Attorney General shall annually allocate from the proceeds obtained under the provisions of subsection a. of this section such amounts to the Department of Personnel as are required for the purposes of fully funding the operation of the "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline established and maintained under the provisions of P.L. , c. (C.)(now pending before the Legislature as this bill) after application of the funds allocated to the hotline pursuant to subsection d. of R.S.39:5-41.¹

(cf: P.L.1993, c.227, s.1)]²

²4. R.S.39:5-41 is amended to read as follows:

39:5-41. a. All fines, penalties and forfeitures imposed and collected under authority of law for any violations of R.S.39:4-63 and R.S.39:4-64 shall be forwarded by the judge to whom the same have been paid to the proper financial officer of a county, if the violation occurred within the jurisdiction of that county's central municipal court, established pursuant to N.J.S.2B:12-1 et seq. or the municipality wherein the violation occurred, to be used by the county or municipality to help finance litter control activities in addition to or supplementing existing litter pickup and removal activities in the municipality.

b. Except as otherwise provided by subsection a. of this section, all fines, penalties and forfeitures imposed and collected under authority of law for any violations of the provisions of this Title, other than those violations in which the complaining witness is the director, a member of his staff, a member of the State Police, a member of a county police department and force or a county park police system in a county that has established a central municipal court, an inspector of the Board of Public Utilities, or a law enforcement officer of any other State agency, shall be forwarded by the judge to whom the same have been paid as follows: one-half of the total amount collected to the financial officer, as designated by the local governing body, of the respective municipalities wherein the violations occurred, to be used by the municipality for general

municipal use and to defray the cost of operating the municipal court; and one-half of the total amount collected to the proper financial officer of the county wherein they were collected, to be used by the county as a fund for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of roads and bridges, snow removal, the acquisition and purchase of rights-of-way, and the purchase, replacement and repair of equipment for use on said roads and bridges therein. Up to 25% of the money received by a municipality pursuant to this subsection, but not more than the actual amount budgeted for the municipal court, whichever is less, may be used to upgrade case processing.

All fines, penalties and forfeitures imposed and collected under authority of law for any violations of the provisions of this Title, in which the complaining witness is a member of a county police department and force or a county park police system in a county that has established a central municipal court, shall be forwarded by the judge to whom the same have been paid to the financial officer, designated by the governing body of the county, for all violations occurring within the jurisdiction of that court, to be used for general county use and to defray the cost of operating the central municipal court.

Whenever any county has deposited moneys collected pursuant to this section in a special trust fund in lieu of expending the same for the purposes authorized by this section, it may withdraw from said special trust fund in any year an amount which is not in excess of the amount expended by the county over the immediately preceding three-year period from general county revenues for said purposes. Such moneys withdrawn from the trust fund shall be accounted for and used as are other general county revenues.

c. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1993, c.293.)

d. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections a. and b. of this section, \$1.00 shall be added to the amount of each fine and penalty imposed and collected under authority of any law for any violation of the provisions of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes or any other motor vehicle or traffic violation in this State and shall be forwarded by the person to whom the same are paid to the State Treasurer. In addition, upon the forfeiture of bail, \$1.00 of that forfeiture shall be forwarded to the State Treasurer. The State Treasurer shall annually deposit those moneys so forwarded in the "Body Armor Replacement" fund established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1997, c.177 (C.52:17B-4.4). Beginning in the fiscal year next following the effective date of this act, the State Treasurer annually shall allocate from those moneys so forwarded an amount not to exceed [~~\$250,000~~ \$400,000] to the Department of Personnel to be expended exclusively for the purposes of funding the operation of the "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline established and maintained under the provisions of P.L. , c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as [Assembly, No. 806 of 1996] this bill).²

(cf: P.L.1997, c.177, s.2)

¹[4.] 5.¹ This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month following enactment, but the Commissioner of Personnel may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of the act.

Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers Initiative – The Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program

- **History of Cop 2 Cop**

Cop 2 Cop is the first program of its kind in the country, enacted into law to focus on suicide prevention and mental health support for law enforcement officers. After a series of police suicides (1996-1998), community leaders in New Jersey believed that law enforcement professionals needed a confidential, safe outlet where they could talk to peers who could understand, offer support and not be judgmental.

In 1999, N.J.S.A., 11 A:2-25, Assembly Bill 1801 was signed into law creating the Cop 2 Cop program. The hotline began accepting calls in November 2000. Cop 2 Cop is a program funded by the New Jersey State Department of Personnel and contracted to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/University Behavioral HealthCare.

Since inception of the Cop 2 Cop program, we have handled over 15,000 calls to the hotline, trained over 6000 individuals and provided over 500+ Critical Incident Stress Management sessions

This New Jersey law has helped Cop 2 Cop become an essential program for law enforcement officers, helping to avert nearly 60 suicides in its first five years in existence.

The Cop 2 Cop program has been the recipient of many awards and has received recognition for excellence by several agencies, including: Certification - American Association of Suicidology, 2002/2005; World Congress Award, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation; New Jersey Governor's Excellence Award - State Office of Volunteerism; PAPD Rescuer Award; New Jersey Attorney General's Recognition Award. See attached press: New York Times Feature Article, "*Tough Guy to Tough Guy*"; The Associated Press Article, "Stressed Officers Can Talk It Out, Cop 2 Cop; Wounded Officers Find Comfort.

Since **Cop 2 Cop** was established in November 2000, we have provided over 600 critical incident stress interventions to law enforcement officers involved in traumatic events statewide following the guidelines of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. Critical Incident Stress Management services are provided to mitigate Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms. Cop 2 Cop crisis interventions have been successfully provided to an estimated 10,000 New Jersey law enforcement officers.

- **History of Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers' Initiative - "The Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program"**

In the summer of 2004, the City of Newark was under siege. Five Newark officers and one Essex County officer were seriously wounded in just two weeks. The unprecedented crime spree created heightened fear, anxiety and concern among citizens and police. When it was over, the City of Newark held its first-ever Police Officers Appreciation Service, an emotionally charged demonstration of how the city and the police department recognized the bravery of their officers. We at Cop 2 Cop participated in this mass to provide support for these officers wounded in the line of duty.

We received a significant increase with Cop 2 Cop hotline for both Critical Incident Stress Management and peer counseling for the wounded officers. During 9/11/01, Cop 2 Cop staff worked closely with members of the Police Self Support group of NYPD, a 22 year old support group with over 150 wounded officers participating. Anthony Senft, a New York detective who was severely wounded while dismantling a bomb, has been working to match wounded officers from New Jersey with those from New York who have suffered the same wounds.

Cop 2 Cop established a Wounded Officers Support Group in January 2005. We have had seven meetings with an increase in attendance each month. There are approximately 17 wounded

officers attending this group residing in the following 5 counties: Essex, Union, Ocean, Warren and Mercer. We included feedback from the wounded officers to create this initiative.

- **National and State Relevant Statistics**

The New Jersey Uniform Crime Report identified 2981 law enforcement assaults that occurred in 2002, 2818 law enforcement assaults in 2003 and 2914 law enforcement assaults in 2004. There are no statistics gathered on officers wounded in the line of duty.

Proposed Program Components:

I. Cop 2 Cop Law Enforcement Officer Time Off:

Any officer(s) involved in the stated traumatic event should immediately have the option to receive three to five days leave with pay (not including days off), upon release from medical treatment.

II. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers Critical Incident Stress Management Services:

A. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Critical Incident Stress Diffusing:

Defusing: A diffusing is a shortened version of a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD). It is provided on the same day as the incident, preferably within a few hours of the end of the situation. The word defusing means to render something harmless before it can do damage. Defusings from the aspect of crisis intervention are a small 3 part group process which is instituted immediately after any traumatic event powerful enough overwhelm the coping mechanisms of the people exposed to it. The process has four goals: A rapid reduction in the intense reactions to a traumatic event; A "normalization" of the experience so that people can return to routine duties as quickly as possible; A re-establishment of the social network of the group so that people do not isolate themselves, but instead see that their reactions are similar to one another; An assessment of the personnel to determine if a full debriefing is necessary.

B. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Critical Incident Stress Debriefing:

Debriefing (CISD): A group meeting or discussion, employing both crisis intervention and educational processes, targeted toward mitigating or resolving the psychological distress associated with a critical incident. It is a 7 phase group process requiring one mental health professional and one, two or three peer support personnel. CISD has three main goals: Mitigate the impact of the critical incident on those who were victims of the event, be they primary, secondary or tertiary victims; Accelerate normal recovery processes in normal people who are experiencing normal stress reactions to abnormal traumatic events; Facilitate the identification of individuals within the group who might be in need of additional CISM services or a referral for therapy.

C. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Critical Incident Stress Demobilization:

A primary stress prevention and intervention technique which is applied immediately after the personnel are released from a large scale scene and before they return to normal duties which consist of 10 minutes of stress management education and 20 minutes of rest and relaxation, including healthy food.

D. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Critical Incident Stress Crisis Management Debriefing:

A large group crisis intervention for up to 300 people, lasting from 45 to 75 minutes. The CMB consists of 4 phases, assembly, information, discussion of reactions and providing coping strategies and resources. It can also be used to triage individuals for more intense appropriate intervention.

III. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers Mental Health Counseling:

A. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Group Therapy:

Ninety minute group services utilizing police personnel and Mental Health Clinicians will offer support for the Northern and Southern regions of the state

every month for wounded officers. Our wounded officers group including 17 officers identified representing Essex, Union, Ocean, Warren and Mercer counties and more will be added monthly.

B. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Group Mission Statement:

“The mission of the Wounded Officers Support of New Jersey is to bring together those officers who have been wounded in the line of duty in order to provide support and counsel to the injured and emotionally distressed. Officers will find a safe place to share their personal experiences. The group will also promote programs that may be beneficial in their recovery. Confidentiality is of foremost importance and support is provided by a network of colleagues from law enforcement statewide.”

C. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officer Individual Therapy:

Utilizing a six-session model, Wounded Officers will be offered individual counseling in the Northern and Southern regions of the state in 45 minute sessions with the goal of healing, structured behavioral therapy to minimize Post-Traumatic Stress symptomology and residual mental health problems. In addition, case management services can be coordinated with the office of Victims of Crime as needed during these sessions.

IV. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers New Jersey Registry:

University Behavioral HealthCare Management Information Services will create a New Jersey Wounded Officers Registry to maintain up-to-date data on Wounded Officers in our state.

V. Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers Budget:

The current funding request is **\$80,000** for the Cop 2 Cop Wounded Officers Initiative annually.

Budget Breakdown for Wounded Officers Fiscal Allocation:

1. Staff:	
a. Per Diem Cop Clinician (Licensed Clinician/Retired Cop)	
\$25,000.00	
b. Cop Peer consultant (2FTEs) @ \$10,000 .00.	
\$20,000.00	
2. Purchase of Services (Facilities, refreshments)	
\$12,000.00	
3. General and Administrative Expense	
\$ 8,000.00	
4. Bi-Annual Psycho-Educational Events (2 @ 5,000)	
\$10,000.00	
5. Management Information Systems Directory Support	
<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>	
	Total
	\$ 80,000.00

Stressed Officers Can Talk It Out, Cop 2 Cop

2/20/2005, 12: 00 a.m.

By Wayne Parry

The Associated Press

PISCATAWAY, N.J. (AP)- Shot in the face, with several teeth and half his lower jaw blown away by a gunman's bullet, Newark Office Eduardo Patinho struggled as much with the emotional aftermath of his injuries as with the physical ones.

He would replay the shooting over and over in his mind, wondering how it happened, what had gone wrong, what he might have done differently to prevent the Oct. 9, 2004 incident, which occurred when he and his partner were dispatched to check out a report of shots fired on a Newark street corner. It kept him awake at night, and crowded his thoughts during the day.

Walking down the street, he would look at people who reminded him of the shooter and get a chill, even though all four suspects believed to have been involved have been apprehended.

"You worry, you're afraid," said Patinho, who has undergone four surgeries already to try to repair the damage to his teeth and jaw, and still faces at least six more to rebuild parts of his face. "I have nightmares sometimes. I'm afraid that the guy that shot me, some person might be on the corner and matches that profile, and you think: 'Is that him?' I needed someone to talk to."

In the world of law enforcement, that's not always easy to do. Cops are trained to be tough, to keep control of a situation and of their own emotions. Many view admitting fears or anxieties as a weakness, and consequently, keep their emotions – and their problems – bottled up.

Enter Cop 2 Cop, a peer counseling program staffed around the clock by retired law enforcement volunteers and trained professionals specializing in police psychology. Unlike other crisis hot lines, the voice on the other end of this phone line for New Jersey officers will be someone who once wore a uniform, carried a gun and maybe even used it, someone who is likely to know firsthand what the caller is going through.

"The first thing they ask is, 'Are you a cop?'" said volunteer counselor Robert Kassai, a retired military police officer and Elmwood Park detective. I tell them 'I'm a retired police officer of 39 years. That breaks the ice."

The calls that come into a warren of cubicles in a nondescript Piscataway office complex run the gamut, from cops frustrated by seemingly unending night shifts or lack of promotions to officers with marital or drinking problems. Some officers say they're stressed out over some trauma they've witnessed, such as the violent death of a child. And a small amount involve cops thinking of taking their own lives.

Once such call came a few years ago in which a police officer called the hot line and admitted being on the verge of committing suicide in public. Strict confidentiality

requirements prohibit outsiders from listening in during the calls and even a general description of the conversation – including whether the caller was male or female – is off-limits.

The staff was able to talk the officer, dissuade him or her from doing anything rash, and arrange appropriate follow-up help. It worked. The officer later wrote an e-mail to counselors, thanking them for listening and caring.

In the only portion of the e-mail that staff would share with a reporter, the officer wrote, “I just wanted to thank you for helping me.” Of the counselor, the officer wrote, “He saved my life.” That officer is now back on the job and doing well.

When it started in November 2000, the program was the only one of its kind in the nation to be mandated by state law, said its director, Cherie Castellano. Former Gov. Christie Whitman signed a bill into law in 1999 creating the program, which is run by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and the state Department of Personnel. Now, more than 14,000 calls later, it is the model for several similar programs across the country.

Most callers discuss depression, work stress, anxiety, marital problems and substance abuse. Seventy-seven percent of callers are men. One said he felt guilty over not being able to stop a teenage boy from killing himself. Another was horrified after finding the frozen body of a baby who had been raped and murdered and buried under snow. Yet another was devastated when a fellow officer died in a car accident and could not be saved.

Not surprisingly, calls to the hotline surged after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, many from officers grieving over lost colleagues, or emotionally fried from weeks of working on “the pile,” picking through the rubble of the twin towers with other rescuers.

Police officers are eight times more likely to commit suicide than to be killed on the job, Castellano said.

“When a person starts talking about suicide, I appreciate that that’s one of their choices,” said Bill Ussery, a retired 23-year veteran Bernardsville officer and highly trained critical-incident counselor with Cop-2-Cop. “I also explore other choices they have.”

The hot line has helped thwart 40 instances in which callers were deemed to be at imminent risk of killing themselves; just two callers have later taken their own lives, Castellano said.

Many callers only gradually open up, using their first contact with the hot line to feel it out and see how demanding or judgmental the people on the other site are. Once it’s clear the counselors are fellow officers who aren’t going to somehow notify the caller’s captain or chief, they open up more subsequent calls. The average caller uses the line three to four times, although one called it 90 times.

Many just want a sympathetic ear, but can eventually be encouraged to agree to follow-up care with a psychologist or other counselor. That’s what happened with Patinho, the Newark officer who was shot in the face. He confided in a sergeant, who put him in

touch with Cop 2 Cop. Now Patinho sees a therapist and a psychologist every two weeks to talk.

“It helps a whole lot,” he said. “The best part was how they reassured me that what I was going through and thinking was absolutely normal for someone who had gotten shot. It makes you feel better, that it’s not just you who has these feelings. It helps a whole lot to have that support.”

Patinho plans to return to active duty in the spring of 2006.

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NEW JERSEY WEEKLY DESK

HEALTH; Tough Guy To Tough Guy

By **JOSHUA JOHNSON (NYT)** 1496 words

EDISON -- LEON LIVINGSTON'S career with the New Jersey Department of Corrections took him through five state prisons and juvenile detention centers. During 25 years on the job he was usually on edge, shepherding inmates through cellblocks, keeping a wary eye on prison gangs and worrying constantly about the safety of the men and women under his command.

The stresses of life inside a prison built up, and for Mr. Livingston and many of his fellow officers, there was only one place to take them.

"You went to the bar, man," he said. "You and the guys. If you worked five days a week, you went to the bar six days a week. You were with the guys, even on one of your days off. But you didn't dare tell anyone that you were tired or stressed, because those are signs of weakness, and we were supposed to be tough men."

Now Mr. Livingston is one of dozens of former New Jersey law enforcement officers who volunteer as peer counselors at Cop 2 Cop, a statewide crisis hot line created to help fellow officers and their families deal with job-related stress.

The program, which began in November 2000, is the only one of its kind in the nation to be mandated by state law. According to the Cop 2 Cop philosophy, people familiar with police culture make the most effective counselors of police officers. Under the law, the program is required to maintain a database of counselors and doctors throughout the state with experience in treating officers. It is not affiliated with any law enforcement agency, and anonymity is guaranteed.

Perhaps most importantly, three of Cop 2 Cop's staff clinicians and all of its 50 peer counseling volunteers are themselves retired officers.

Distraught officers are less likely to respond to a counselor unfamiliar with law enforcement culture, said Cherie Castellano, Cop 2 Cop's director.

"Cops don't historically like mental health specialists," she said. "They see a psychologist and think, 'There's the guy who could end my career.'"

The bill that created Cop 2 Cop was signed by Gov. Christie Whitman in 1999. The program was envisioned as a way to help law enforcement officers talk about the difficulties of what can be a disorienting career.

"When you become a cop, you live two lives," said Nicholas C. Recanati, a retired member of the Bergen County Police Department. "You don't want to go home and talk about the ugliness you've seen. Why bring that into your family life? So you try to ignore it and compartmentalize things. And then your signals get crossed and all of a sudden you're yelling at your wife or your kids and you don't know why."

Anecdotal evidence suggests that rates of alcohol abuse, depression and divorce are higher among police officers than the general public. Though statistics have not been compiled nationally, most law enforcement experts believe the police suicide rate is also higher, perhaps by as much as 50 percent. Because suicides among police officers are often reported as accidents or met with official silence, definitive numbers are hard to come by.

"There's an inherent resistance on the part of law enforcement officers to get treatment," said Bill Ussery, a former lieutenant with the Bernardsville Police Department. Mr. Ussery retired in 1991 and subsequently became licensed as a professional counselor before coming to work as a Cop 2 Cop clinician.

"They're tough guys, and the reason they get hired is to solve other people's problems," he said. "They aren't supposed to have problems themselves."

Dan Hoffman, a retired Camden police captain, described his work as a Cop 2 Cop clinician as a formalization of a role he naturally played while on the force.

"In Camden there would be a person who was going through some issue -- a marital breakup, etc.," he said. "There were always one or two guys you could talk to. I was always one of those guys. Someone would say, 'Dan, can we go have a cup of coffee?' And I'd think, 'Uh-oh, it's time to turn my collar around and be a counselor.' "

"Now," he said, " they feel like they can talk to me because I'm a cop, not a shrink -- even though I am a shrink."

The program, based in Edison, is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Personnel and University Behavioral Health Care, a department of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Ussery and two other licensed counselors work with a rotating shift of volunteers. The volunteers answer phones, referring a caller to the clinicians if a problem seems to require professional intervention. On the spot, a Cop 2 Cop counselor can make an appointment with one of the more than 50 therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists in the program's statewide network.

A new class of volunteers had completed training less than a month before Sept. 11. After that, the state opened Cop 2 Cop to anyone affected by the attacks. Ms. Castellano spent several days at ground zero, working with the New York Police Department to organize stress debriefings for officers. Cop 2 Cop teams have participated in the counseling of 1,200 New York police officers since the attacks.

"Sept. 11 was going to make us or break us," Ms. Castellano said, referring to the program's reputation within the law enforcement community. "And it made us."

The program has begun to attract attention nationwide. The chief executive of University Behavioral Health Care, Christopher Kosseff, said he had been contacted by several police departments in other states interested in using Cop 2 Cop as a model for their own programs.

Reese Butler, executive director of the National Hopeline Network, which operates the national suicide hot line 800-SUICIDE, has also discussed integrating Cop 2 Cop's approach into its crisis centers across the country.

"We would love to see this replicated," he said. "As far as we know, it's the only program of its kind in the country."

While older, retired officers recall a culture that encouraged the silent endurance of stress, younger officers have become more willing to ask for help, Ms. Castellano said.

"Law enforcement is different than it used to be," she said. "Officers are more educated, and they want to get help. They don't want to get divorced all the time. They don't want to die."

Nicholas Recanati, the former Bergen County police officer, is one who sought help. Cop 2 Cop, wanting to maintain its reputation for confidentiality, urged him to remain anonymous when talking about his experiences. But he said he was so grateful to the program that he wanted his name published.

Officer Recanati narrowly escaped being killed last March when a murder suspect shot at him at point blank range with an assault rifle. The bullet grazed Mr. Recanati's head as the officer, falling backward, shot and killed the suspect.

Officer Recanati took several days off. When he returned to work, the problems started. He began to lose his temper more easily. He was quick to take risks. Any out-of-the-ordinary behavior he encountered could cause him to panic.

"I was cracking, I was cracking," said Officer Recanati, who was a member of the bomb squad as well as an investigator for the medical examiner's office. "The shooting,

the stress of daily life, playing with bombs all day, seeing an average of a body a day -- I was starting to tilt."

He felt he couldn't get help from his department. At a friend's urging he called Cop 2 Cop. Within hours he was on the phone with three different doctors and began to undergo counseling.

"It saved my life," Officer Recanati said. He decided to retire at the age of 34 and become the director of operations for a private security company. "What helped me make the decision was talking to the doctors. They helped me see there was no reason to do the macho thing and stay for the sake of staying."

He added that after he sought help, four other officers who had been involved in the shooting underwent counseling, ultimately deciding to retire.

"I'm getting calls from guys who are showing such courage," said Leon Livingston, the retired corrections officer.

"Twenty years ago," he said, "you could have gotten into a fistfight for suggesting that someone go to counseling."

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Hot line helps cops deal with stress, depression

By PAMELA SROKA-HOLZMANN
STAFF WRITER – Courier News

Donna Roman Hernandez kept the business card for the COP 2 COP intervention hot line in her wallet for nine months before she made "the" call.

Hernandez's fiance had recently suffered a brain injury in a car accident, her mother had died, and being the only female police officer in the department was difficult.

"I did not feel I could openly talk to my fellow police officers," she said Friday. "In law enforcement, you're supposed to be tough. If you are weak, even if it's for a moment, it's not something that is well-received."

Then, during her 3 a.m. break while on duty, Hernandez called the hot line. Hernandez said that when the male voice picked up on the other line, she felt let down and told the listener, "You won't understand."

The voice replied, "Why don't you give me a chance."

Hernandez then called back the next day and the day after, forming what she described as a "telephonic bond" with a female peer counselor and licensed minister. The listener later was identified as Shelia Hobson, a lieutenant with the Essex County Prosecutor's office -- also the first female assigned to that department's homicide squad.

The calls, made some six years ago, also changed her life, Hernandez said.

And that's what COP 2 COP is supposed to do. The 24-hour hot line was designed to serve all public-safety employees and assist those experiencing depression, anxiety and stress. Staffed by more than 50 qualified retired officers, as well as law-enforcement clinicians and mental-health specialists, the hot line provides confidential help and referrals to clients.

Cherie Castellano, director of COP 2 COP, said the program was launched in November 2000 following the suicides of two state law enforcement officers in the 1990s. The program offers peer support, clinical telephone assessments, critical incident stress management, and psychiatric and therapist referrals in the program's network, among other services.

Castellano said COP 2 COP, which is based at UMDNJ-University Behavioral HealthCare in Piscataway, is the first program in the nation legislated into law to focus on suicide prevention and mental-health support for law enforcement officers. The program is a partnership between UMDNJ and the New Jersey State Department of Personnel, and is the only law enforcement hot line nationwide that is certified by the American Association of Suicidology.

The COP 2 COP team members are trained in critical incident stress management and will respond to and conduct "debriefings and defusing" that are the result of a critical incident, Castellano said.

"Police officers are four times more likely to commit suicide than to be killed in the line of duty," she said. "COP 2 COP officers understand the job, and they are trained to respond to calls from men and women who answer the call of duty daily."

Since COP 2 COP was established in 2000, more than 20,100 calls have been answered, and more than 65 suicides have been subverted statewide, Castellano said.

- *Pamela Sroka-Holzmann can be reached at (908) 707-3155 or psroka@c-n.com.*

What you can do:

For more information on the COP 2 COP program, visit the organization's Web site at www.cop2coponline.net, or for help, call the hot line at (866) COP-2COP.

Helping the police purge their demons **“Her program is a grand slam for cops in New Jersey.”**

JIM NESTOR, NEW JERSEY STATE POLICE, ON CASTELLANO'S COP2COP HOTLINE

BY BRAD PARKS
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

The inspiration struck Cherie Castellano a few years ago when she noticed a pattern to the hotline calls she was monitoring.

As the counselor overseeing the phone bank of a mental health program at University Hospital in Newark, Castellano realized that of the thousands of calls coming in each month, some of the worst crises were gripping one group: cops.

“These guys were constantly responding to calls about gang violence and murders and carjackings, and they were being victimized by it,” Castellano said. “They were trying to rescue all these people, but no one was rescuing them.”

Castellano got a grant to study the effects of exposure to violence on police officers and set up a confidential, toll-free hotline for officers to call. She was quickly floored not only by the volume of calls but by the depth of the problems: officers talking about their repressed anger, their drinking problems, their feelings of despair.

She soon realized this was not just a part-time study. This was her life's calling. Castellano found permanent funding for her hotline — first through a police union, then through the New Jersey Legislature — and was soon named founding director of Cop2Cop, a counseling program for police and by police that over the last five years has fielded 15,000 calls on its 866-COP-2-COP line.

This year, Cop2Cop opened its phone lines to law enforcement members dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, allowing officers from New Orleans to discover what those in New Jersey already knew.

“She's a grand slam,” said Jim Nestor, director of the office of organization and development for the New Jersey State Police. “I call her the grand slam, because her program is a grand slam for cops in New Jersey.”

Castellano is quick to give credit to the staff of 50 retired law enforcement officers who work alongside her at University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-University Behavioral HealthCare and serve as the voices on the other end of the line.

But the people involved are just as quick to point back to the woman who founded the hotline and remains its driving force. With an obvious charisma and a personality that borders on effusive, Castellano is far from the stereotype of a reserved therapist. And her cops love her for it.

“She's a dynamo,” said Joe Orgo, a retired Newark detective who now makes use of his Rutgers social work degree as one of Cop2Cop's counselors. “She's the best boss I ever had and she's the backbone of this program. She sleeps, eats and drinks this stuff. You just can't believe one person has as much energy as she does.”

In a way, anyone who knew Castellano as a little girl could have seen this coming. She was the one who was always organizing the other kids in her Montclair neighborhood into holding bake sales or fashion shows. She was the captain of the cheerleading squad at Montclair High School. She was Miss Essex County 1981.

“I was a terrible Miss Essex County,” Castellano said, laughing because she laughs all the time. “I used to wear my crown when I wasn’t supposed to. I’d pass through the Essex County tolls on the Parkway and declare, ‘This is my toll booth.’ I was way out of control with it.”

Yet she was also the girl who brought Sunday macaroni dinner to her grandfather, who was suffering from depression. Interest in her grandfather’s condition eventually led Castellano to a master’s degree in counseling from Montclair State.

Her first job was as a crisis counselor in the emergency room at Mountainside Hospital in Montclair. Then she went to UMDNJ University Behavioral HealthCare, where she had her epiphany about cops.

She realized that police officers not only were suffering more than the usual population — research has shown they’re far more likely to commit suicide, and disproportionately suffer from stress-related disorders — they were less likely to seek treatment for it.

She knew that from listening to the phone calls coming in. She also knew it from her personal life. A mother of two who now lives in Roseland, she is married to Mark Castellano, a detective in the Morris County Prosecutor’s Office narcotics task force.

“Police officers are hesitant to use traditional mental health providers, and they don’t want to go to see their fitness-for-duty psychologist because it might have an impact on their careers,” she said. “They’re just an underserved population.”

The officers now being served by Cop2Cop are people like Kennedy Murray. A detective for the Essex County Sheriff’s Office, he was on loan to the U.S. Marshals Service’s Fugitive Task Force when he was shot in the stomach in July 2004.

He was out of work for months and struggled to recover in many ways. A year-and-a-half later, he still suffers from abdominal pain and shortness of breath. A backfiring car can panic him.

“When a police officer gets shot, everyone rushes to the hospital to see if you’re okay,” Murray said. “But after you get out of the hospital, the cameras are gone and your fellow officers stop visiting, Cop2Cop is still there. It means something to know someone still cares.”

For the officers in New Orleans, whom Castellano visited with two other counselors last month, it was also meaningful. Castellano had grown accustomed to dealing with officers who responded to disasters — she and her team have a pile of awards and citations from their work after 9/11.

Yet whereas law enforcement officers responding to 9/11 were treated as heroes, the New Orleans Police Department has taken a series of public relations hits that have only worsened the already fragile morale there. Over several days of group debriefings, Cop2Cop tried to bolster spirits and deal with the emotional damage left by Katrina.

“That program has been a major boost to us,” said Jerry Gardiner, executive director of the Southern Law Enforcement Foundation, which includes officers from Louisiana. “The

law enforcement community down here has been just overwhelmed by this thing. To have a 24/7 crisis line is a real shot in the arm for us.”

In dealing with the New Orleans officers, Castellano has drawn inspiration from a Helen Keller quote. “Although the world is full of suffering,” Keller said, “it is full also of the overcoming of it.”

That’s what Cop2Cop is all about. And it’s what keeps Castellano going.

Cop2Cop-Fact Sheet

“Just the Facts”

- Legislated into NJ law
- Started, November 2000
- Over 23,000 Cop2Cop calls to date
- Staffed by over 30 retired cop volunteers
- 67+ suicides subverted via Cop2Cop hotline
- 60+ commendation letters/emails from agencies, Officers & their families
- Only nationally recognized cop hotline in the country
- Award winning website: www.cop2coponline.net
- Cop2Cop – Certified by the American Association of Suicidology – Only cop hotline in the country certified
- Endorsed by National Police Psychology Experts –
- 96% Cop customer satisfaction rating
- Our mission –
“Answer the call” Whatever Cops Need

1-866-COP-2COP