Press Release

April 21, 2020

"FrontLine WarmLine" Launches to Help Maine's Health Care Workers and First Responders Manage Emotional Toll of COVID-19

Phone help service supported by Mills Administration and behavioral health partners is staffed by volunteer professionals

AUGUSTA– A new volunteer phone support service, the FrontLine WarmLine, launched today to help Maine health care workers and first responders manage the stress of serving on the front lines of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FrontLine Warmline serves health care professionals, such as physicians, nurses and counselors, as well as emergency medical services personnel, law enforcement, and others who are directly responding to the pandemic in Maine. The line is staffed by volunteer professionals activated through Maine Responds, including licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, social workers, and nurse practitioners, who can help callers to deal with anxiety, irritability stress, poor sleep, grief or worry and, if needed, connect them with additional supports.

The FrontLine WarmLine is available to clinicians and first responders from 8 am to 8 pm, 7 days a week by calling **(207) 221-8196 or 866-367-4440**. Text capability will be added soon.

The FrontLine WarmLine is a joint effort of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Maine Department of Public Safety's Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, The Opportunity Alliance, Maine Psychological Association, and the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

"Maine's health care professionals and first responders have worked tirelessly to protect Maine people in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," **said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew**. "We recognize that this work takes an emotional toll so we're proud to support the FrontLine WarmLine as a resource offered by behavioral health peers who know how to help."

"Maine's first responders and health care providers put themselves under great stress responding to this pandemic," **said Jessica Pollard, director of the DHHS Office of Behavioral Health.** "It's important for these dedicated professionals to know we're here for them and are ready to support them in managing the completely expected reactions they may have. We thank all of the volunteer professionals who are pitching in to help."

"As always, Maine's first responders and EMS clinicians are dedicated to continuing to provide high-quality services and care to the people they serve, but it is equally imperative that we serve them with resources like the FrontLine WarmLine to help manage the stress, anxiety, and worries associated with responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," **said Maine EMS Director Sam Hurley.** "Maine EMS is wholly supportive of the FrontLine WarmLine and encourages all first responders and EMS clinicians to reach out for a helping hand."

"It's been inspiring to see Maine's mental health community stepping up to support Maine's front line in this pandemic," **said Ed Pontius of the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians**. "All the clinicians and others caring for patients — Maine's first responders and law enforcement — are doing an important job for all of us. We know how tough this work can be on them. We are glad to be able to support them and their crucial work, and we join all of Maine in appreciation of their courage and heroic efforts for all of us."

The FrontLine WarmLine will be available until further notice.

For those who are not health care workers or first responders but are experiencing emotional distress, several other 24/7 resources are available:

- Statewide Crisis Line: **888-568-1112**
- Intentional Peer Support Warmline to speak with staff who have lived experience with mental health conditions: **866-771-9276**
- Suicide Hotline: **800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)**
- **211** and 211maine.org can provide general COVID-19 information, including how to access behavioral health and social service resources
- Maine DHHS Office of Behavioral Health resources guide

Frontline Warmline Logo (PDF)