

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Fire Department

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DATE: 11/9/2021

SUBJECT: Duluth Fire participates in Movember Month to promote men's health

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

Duluth Fire participates in Movember Month to promote men's health

[Duluth, MN] The Duluth Fire Department is proud to recognize and participate in Movember. Movember is the practice that started in Australia where men grow mustaches to support men's health causes including prostate and testicular cancer, and mental health awareness.

"Growing mustaches is not only a way for members of the Department to bond and have a slight competition around the style and thickness of stache's," said Captain Brian Black. "The month also brings awareness to serious issues that are not a laughing matter."

The DFD has an internal peer support group where members can talk about things happening in their lives. Topics could include trauma that someone has had from a call that they went on, or personal issues that they may not feel comfortable to share with anyone else. Members often talk about how close knit they are with their co-workers.

"Everyone works together, eats together, and endures a lot of heavy types of calls together," Black said. "It's a place where we all know what each other are going through and can provide a safe place for people to open up about how they are really doing."

PTSD and depression rates among firefighters and police officers have been found to be as much as five times higher than the rates within the civilian population, which causes these first responders to commit suicide at a considerably higher rate.

Cancer continues to be the most dangerous threat to firefighter health and safety. According to data the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). Between 2002 and 2019, cancer caused 66% of career firefighter line-of-duty deaths. Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety show that firefighters have a nine percent higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14% higher risk of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population.

"The importance of health is something that we are all aware of when we take this job," Assistant Chief Dennis Edwards said. "Taking care of ourselves both physically and mentally is extremely important. We can't emphasize enough how something as easy as picking up the phone to call and check on someone, ask them how they are doing, and support them if they need to talk, or are afraid to go see a specialist. Cancer and suicide is something that touches fire departments across the country. It's in our best interest to prevent both whenever we can."

Over the next few weeks, members of the Department will be showing off their mustaches on the Department's social media pages in an effort to bring awareness to specific men's health issues. The Duluth Fire Department would like to encourage men to visit the doctor regularly, get screened for cancer, and to be aware of signs of depression and suicide. If you are concerned for yourself or someone you know, please call 1-800-273-8255.

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