

# WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

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CHIEF OF POLICE



## MEDIA RELEASE

IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE

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### Westminster Police Recognized for Proactive Efforts in Responding to Persons Affected By Mental Illness

Westminster, Maryland – The Westminster Police Department is pleased to announce that they have completed a pledge they took in June 2017 to further enhance their response to those suffering from mental illness in their community. The pledge is part of an initiative called the One Mind Campaign started by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), a professional association of law enforcement executives that provides training and technical assistance. To join the One Mind Campaign, law enforcement agencies must pledge to implement four promising practices to ensure successful interactions between police officers and persons affected by mental illness.

In the law enforcement community, mental illness has become a common focus, with some departments estimating that as many as 20% of their calls for service are related to mental health issues in some way. Chief Jeff Spaulding made the decision to join the One Mind Campaign because of the prevalence of these calls in the City and the need to ensure that officers are handling them in a safe and effective manner which optimizes the potential of a positive outcome for everyone involved. At the current time, seven Maryland law enforcement agencies have taken the One Mind Pledge. The Westminster Police Department is the first agency in Maryland and one of only 20 in the U.S. to complete the requirements for certification.

In completing the One Mind Pledge, the Westminster Police Department has established sustainable partnerships with local mental health organizations, developed and implemented a model policy to address officers' interactions with those affected by mental illness, and provided all of their officers and dispatchers with Mental Health First Aid training. Additionally, 20% of the department has completed the more intensive Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. The 40-hour CIT curriculum was designed to train a team of specialized officers to respond to calls that involve individuals in crisis or with mental health disorders such as depression or intellectual disability.

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The curriculum includes education on various de-escalation techniques as well as live role-play scenarios of officers responding to persons who are experiencing a mental health crisis. The Westminster Police Department, in collaboration with the Carroll County Health Department's Bureau of Prevention, Wellness and Recovery and the Carroll County Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, initiated the Carroll County Crisis Intervention Team in November of 2014. There are now 44 CIT officers and deputies in the County.

Other initiatives that the Westminster Police Department has pursued in response to the needs of this community include participation in the Carroll County Drug Court, the Mental Health Court Diversion Initiative and collaboration with the recently implemented Mobile Crisis Team. Chief Spaulding stated "it is important that we provide our staff with clear guidance and effective training to deal with these individuals in crisis. The partnerships we have forged within the mental health community in Carroll County have played a key role in connecting these individuals with much needed resources in a timely and effective way. I am very pleased that we have played a key role in enhancing the safety and quality of life for those affected by mental illness in our community".

For more information about the One Mind Campaign, please visit the IACP's website: <http://www.theiacp.org/onemindcampaign/>.

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