

**Lake County Sheriff's Office
Mark C. Curran Jr., Sheriff**

MEDIA RELEASE

Lake County Sheriff's Office • 25 South Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue • Waukegan, Illinois 60085

For Immediate Release

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**Lake County Sheriff's Office and Lake County Health
Department Announce Crisis Outreach and Support Team
(COaST) to Combat Mental Illness**

On October 1, 2018, the Lake County Sheriff's Office will begin a collaborative pilot program to support Lake County residents with mental or behavioral health illnesses who interact with its law enforcement division. The Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Lake County Health Department for the project, named the Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COaST). The team will consist of one deputy sheriff, Deputy James Yanecek, and one licensed mental health counselor. Deputy Yanecek has been a vital member of the Sheriff's Office Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and has been in law enforcement for 22 years.

Within approximately three days of a law enforcement officer encountering a mental health interaction or an opioid overdose, the COaST deputy will arrange a meeting with the individual or "cold call" their residence. During that meeting, the deputy will check the well-being of the person and determine if they have sought any treatment or services since the initial event. The deputy will then provide a "warm handoff" to the Health Department counselor, who will conduct a brief assessment, and if necessary, refer the person to appropriate services.

While this type of program is new to Lake County, communities across the United States have seen success implementing these types of programs, resulting in a reduction in law enforcement interactions with people having a mental illness. These programs are also shown to reduce the likelihood of individuals being arrested or re-arrested and provide a healthier and more stable environment for all.

Sheriff Mark Curran said, "This initiative will both strengthen and improve the mental health awareness and training that has already been taking place at the Sheriff's Office. This is yet another illustration of the priority we place on mental health support in Lake County. The COaST program will not only keep Lake County safe, but keep Lake County healthy!"

End of Release