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Senator David Carlucci Highlights Importance of Trauma Informed Care During National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

(Albany, NY) – Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) is calling for trauma informed care to be front and center for essential workers as September marks Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Psychological trauma is often caused by a distressing event that is typically out of a person's control, and mental health experts warn essential workers are likely facing mental health trauma due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health trauma can lead to Acute Stress Disorder (ASD), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance use, and anxiety, mood, personality, and eating disorders. When a person has one or more disorders they are at higher risk for suicide.

To help minimize the long-term effects of trauma, Carlucci introduced first of its kind legislation ([S.8608A](#)) to create a Frontline Workers Trauma Informed Care Advisory Council within the New York State Office of Mental Health. The Council will be made up of mental health and substance abuse experts who will help to support better access to trauma-related behavioral health supports and preventative services for frontline workers. The Council will do this in a

holistic approach by identifying services, training organizations and developing systems to inform and refer frontline workers.

Senator David Carlucci said, “Frontline workers are battling the fear of contracting the virus, potentially exposing their family members, and shortages of personal protective equipment. We need to ensure workers have access to the services they need if facing emotional trauma because if left untreated mental health disorders develop and can lead to suicide.”

In August, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) found a total of 40.9 percent of U.S. adults reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder (30.9%), symptoms of a trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic (26.3%), and having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19(13.3%). Meanwhile, physicians have higher rates of burnout, depressive symptoms, and suicide risk than the general population, according to the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#). The Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) cites in a survey out of China, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, about 50 percent of physicians and nurses reported symptoms of depression, 44 percent reported symptoms of anxiety, and 34 percent reported insomnia.

"The Frontline Workers Trauma Informed Care Council will help in getting essential workers the help they need in coping with the symptoms of trauma before the mental health crisis gets worse," **said Carlucci**.

A Frontline Workers Trauma Informed Care Advisory Council is supported by the NYS Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors, Inc. and the MHANYS.

The bill has passed the full legislature and awaits the Governor's signature to be signed into law.

If you or someone you know is suicidal, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). To view Senator Carlucci's 2019 report on Suicide Prevention in New York State, please [click here](#).