
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2413 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY DAVIS, CALTAGIRONE, V. BROWN, TOOHL, DONATUCCI,
LONGIETTI, READSHAW, KIRKLAND, DRISCOLL, COHEN, MURT,
MILLARD, SCHLOSSBERG, BARRAR, KINSEY, DIGIROLAMO, YOUNGBLOOD,
JAMES, MARSICO, ROSS, BIZZARRO, NEILSON, MASSER, GIBBONS,
HAHN, WHEELAND, ROZZI, GOODMAN, MAHONEY, O'BRIEN, PAYNE,
WARD, BULLOCK, MAJOR, BRADFORD, EVERETT, D. PARKER, GALLOWAY
AND FARRY, OCTOBER 18, 2016

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, OCTOBER 18, 2016

AN ACT

1 Designating the month of September of each year as "Code Green:
2 First Responders Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month."

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Code Green
7 Act.

8 Section 2. Legislative findings and declarations.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) First responders, including law enforcement
11 officers, firefighters and paramedics, routinely and
12 courageously confront risk.

13 (2) First responders draw on training and experience to
14 make sound decisions in the middle of a crime scene, four-
15 alarm fire or medical emergency and, when duty requires,

1 experience horrors, trauma and loss that few, if any, can
2 imagine.

3 (3) For many years, the prevailing culture among first
4 responders has been stoicism, any trauma a first responder
5 had gone through was to be dealt with quietly, dealt with
6 alone and the first responder was expected to return to work.

7 (4) Thanks to efforts like The Code Green Campaign,
8 after many decades that culture is changing.

9 (5) The first responder community is learning that
10 emotional health, in addition to physical health, is critical
11 to readiness and that seeking support is a sign of strength
12 and not weakness.

13 (6) The Code Green Campaign was founded in March 2014 by
14 a group of emergency medical services (EMS) professionals who
15 had been growing increasingly concerned about the high rate
16 of suicide among fellow first responders and the lack of
17 discussion about mental health in general in the profession.

18 (7) The Code Green Campaign takes its name from both the
19 color of the mental health awareness ribbon and from the
20 "code alerts" that EMS uses to designate an emergency
21 patient, and by using the symbol of a code green, the idea is
22 that first responders are calling a code alert on their own
23 mental health.

24 (8) The mission of The Code Green Campaign is to first
25 bring awareness to the high rates of mental health issues
26 among first responders and reduce them, then to eliminate the
27 stigma that prevents people from admitting these issues exist
28 and asking for help and also to educate first responders on
29 self and peer care and finally to lobby for systemic change
30 in how mental health issues are addressed by first responder

1 agencies.

2 (9) The campaign raises awareness by giving first
3 responders an outlet to tell individual stories of mental
4 health issues anonymously and republishing those stories so
5 the stories can be viewed by everyone.

6 (10) It also allows those who do not have first-hand
7 experience with mental health issues to see that mental
8 health issues can affect anyone, which will hopefully
9 decrease the stigma.

10 (11) In the future, The Code Green Campaign hopes to be
11 able to provide education to first responders, agencies and
12 communities.

13 (12) More information and additional resources about The
14 Code Green Campaign, suicide prevention and suicide awareness
15 can be found at www.CodeGreenCampaign.org.

16 Section 3. Code Green Month.

17 (a) Designation.--The month of September of each year is
18 designated as "Code Green: First Responder Suicide Prevention
19 and Awareness Month."

20 (b) Proclamation.--The Governor shall issue annually a
21 proclamation calling for observation of "Code Green: First
22 Responder Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month" and to
23 encourage first responders to take better care of themselves and
24 to urge all residents to better understand the behavioral health
25 issues of first responders.

26 Section 4. Effective date.

27 This act shall take effect immediately.