



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John W. Mannion

Onondaga County Sheriff's Office receives \$100,000 to support officers' mental health

SENATOR JOHN W. MANNION January 9, 2024

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH**

The Onondaga County Sheriff's Department has been awarded 100-thousand dollars in state funding to help officers who might be having difficulty coping in the aftermath of responding to a troubling call. The mental health services will also be made available to Syracuse Police and other law enforcement agencies across the county. Senator John Mannion secured the funding and says it's necessary to support law enforcement officers for their work.

q

"...Part of that gratitude means that we make sure that we support our officers, deputies and the members of the community that they interact with. That they have access to high quality mental healthcare free from stigma and readily and easily available."

Reflecting in his many years in law enforcement and the military, Sheriff Toby Shelley recalled a time when he responded to an extremely difficult call involving a young toddler who accidentally hung himself.

q

“... And my youngest son was about that age at the time, I went to that call. I did CPR, I did what I could. Medical came and I’m standing in the back of the garage and my crusty old sergeant showed up and he said, ‘What are you doing?’ And I was still like trying to take it all in. And my sergeant said to me, ‘How about acting like a cop and do something. How do you know the mother didn’t do that?’ And in our time, that’s how you were treated. Nobody really cared about how you felt about something. So, times have changed and this needs to evolve and this is going to help that evolution to help people.”

Shelley says the department currently has one dedicated mental health professional working part-time but, the position will become full-time soon. He explains that officers sometimes become victims of emotional distress and trauma after responding to certain emergency situations.

View the article [here](#).