

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Texas Blue Chip Program Expands Statewide to Support Law Enforcement Mental Health**

DALLAS, TEXAS (June 17, 2024) – The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute in partnership with the Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT), local police leadership, and The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) today announced the statewide expansion of the Texas Blue Chip Program that supports law enforcement officers with self-directed, confidential, and no-cost clinical mental health services.

“Texas recorded the highest number of law enforcement officer suicide deaths in 2022. While officers have avenues to seek mental health care through insurance or peer networks, and we have seen a significant decline in suicide deaths over the last year, many continue to hesitate to seek help, even in the aftermath of traumatic incidents,” said BJ Wagner, Meadows Institute Senior Vice President of Health and Public Safety. “With the statewide launch of this program, Texas is now the only state in the nation that offers both a statewide law enforcement peer support network and a program that provides anonymous and free mental health services to officers when and where they want it.”

[The Texas Blue Chip Program](#) is a groundbreaking initiative aimed at offering police officers a self-directed access point for confidential and free clinical mental health services in collaboration with the Texas Law Enforcement Peer Network (TLEPN). The program introduces specially designed poker chips that are accessible at police stations and virtually on the TLEPN app. These chips grant an officer access to discreet and confidential counseling sessions with selected mental health providers who are supported by the program through generous funding from Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) and CFT’s Support for Allen Fund. The program provides officers services without having to go through an employee assistance program, officer wellness programs at a police department, a peer network, or insurance referrals.

The Texas Blue Chip Program was initially introduced to support police officers across the Dallas-Fort Worth and greater North Texas region in response to the events of the May 2023 shootings in Allen.

“Communities Foundation of Texas’ Support for Allen Fund continues to fund the organizations serving those affected by the tragedy in Allen, including the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. CFT has a long history of supporting the incredible and impactful work of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute as they work to identify equitable systemic solutions to mental health needs and to further data-driven mental health policy.

At CFT, we believe that both mental health and public safety are key elements of a thriving community, and our support of Meadows' work addresses both. Last month, we extended our initial funding with an additional three-year grant commitment to continue our support for the Texas Blue Chip program, which we see as a life-saving initiative," said Wayne White, President and CEO at Communities Foundation of Texas.

Press conference participants included BJ Wagner, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute's Senior Vice President for Health and Public Safety, Chief Special Agent Will Johnson of the BNSF Railway Police, Chief Steve Dye of the Allen Police Department, Executive Director of Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Gregory Stevens, and Executive Director of the Police Chiefs Association Gene Ellis. Calvert Collins-Bratton, Chief Relationships Officer at Communities Foundation of Texas, provided opening remarks.

"We love this program because it allows officers to get help they need immediately and without stigma, so they can continue to serve in a healthy manner," said Chief Dye of the Allen Police Department.

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#### **About Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute**

Launched in 2014, the Meadows Institute helps Texas legislators, state officials, members of the judiciary, and local, state, and national leaders identify equitable systemic solutions to mental health needs, and has become Texas's most trusted source for data-driven mental health policy. The Meadows Institute is making a significant impact in multiple areas, helping Texas and national leaders shift the focus of new investments toward early intervention, addressing the mental health crisis in our jails and emergency rooms, and helping all people with mental health needs recover and be well. Learn more at [mmhpi.org](http://mmhpi.org).

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