LMC LEAGUE of MINNESOTA CITIES

Public Safety
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

What is PTSD?

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault.

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION™

What is PTSD?



To be diagnosed with PTSD, symptoms must last for more than a month and cause significant life disruption.

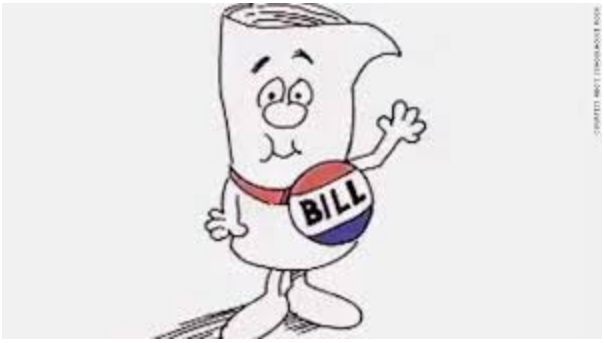
PTSD often occurs with other related conditions such as depression, substance abuse, memory problems, and other physical
and mental health issues.

Not everyone exposed to trauma develops PTSD

Legislative History

Workers' Compensation

- Compensable in roughly 35 states
- Became compensable in Minnesota in 2013
- Presumption became effective in 2019



How is Minnesota Different?

- Progressive on mental health
- Labor market
- COVID
- Recent social issues



What's Ahead?

- Changes to public safety
- Impacts on communities
- Pressure on PERA

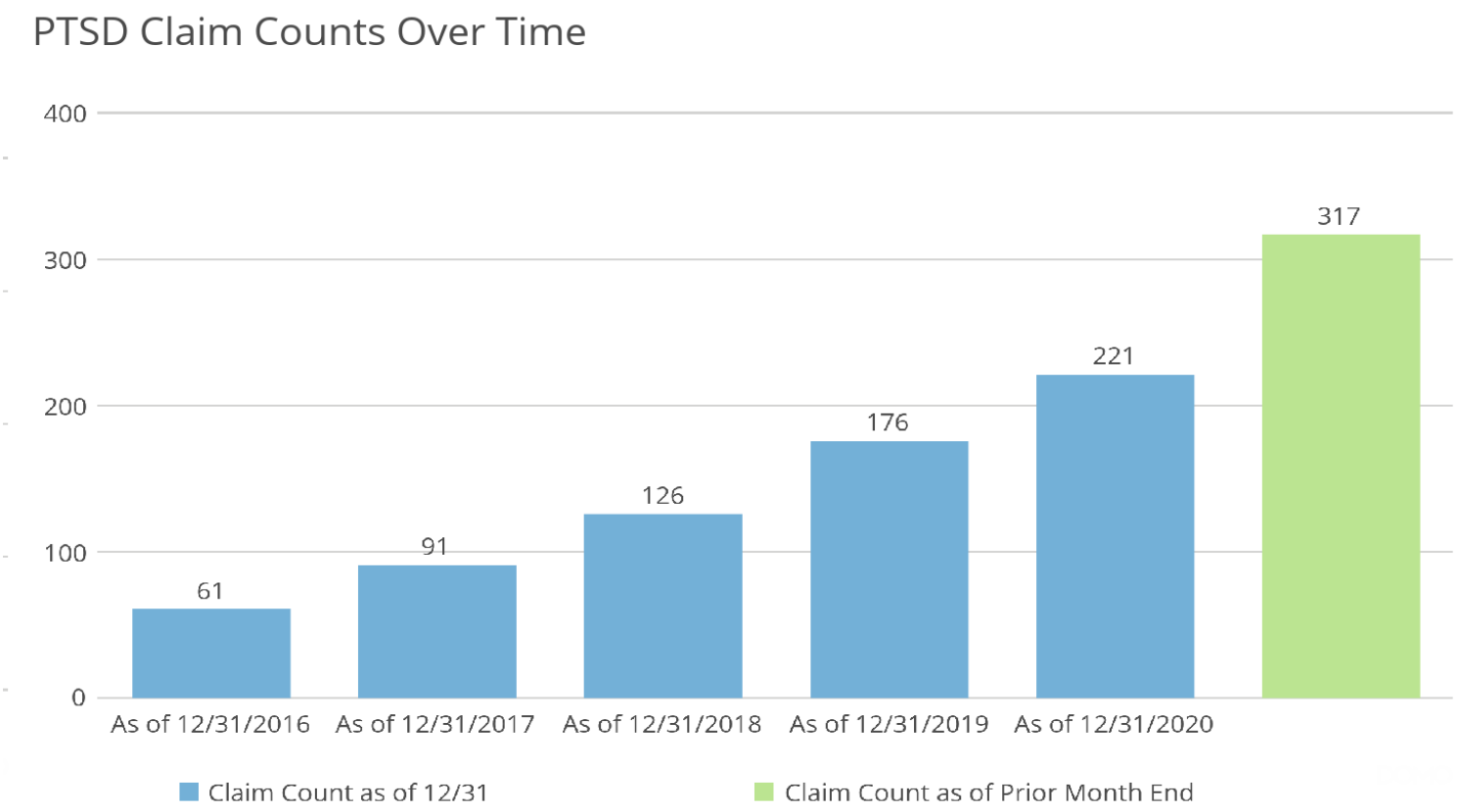


What's the underlying problem?

Workers' compensation system isn't the right place for a social safety net

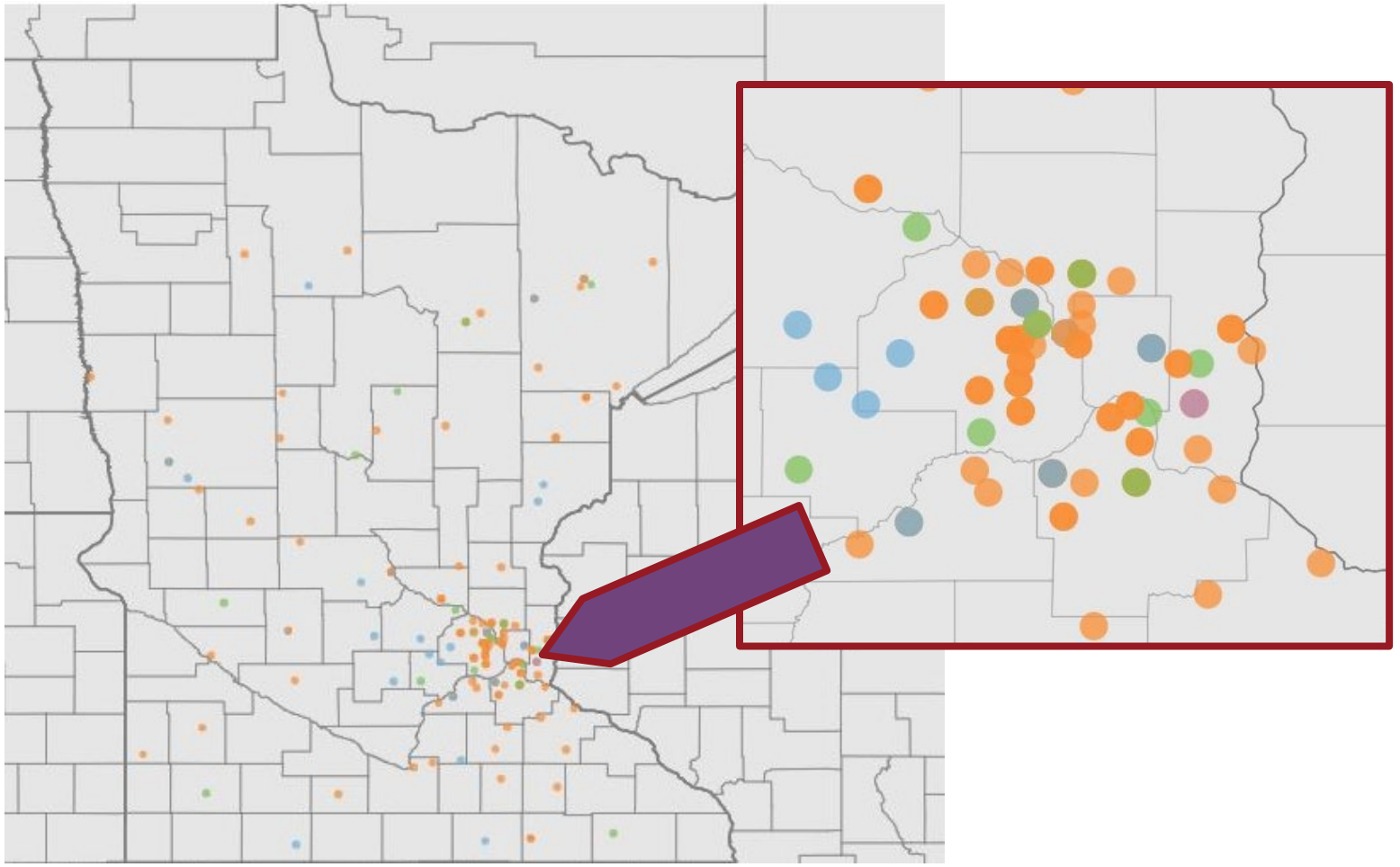


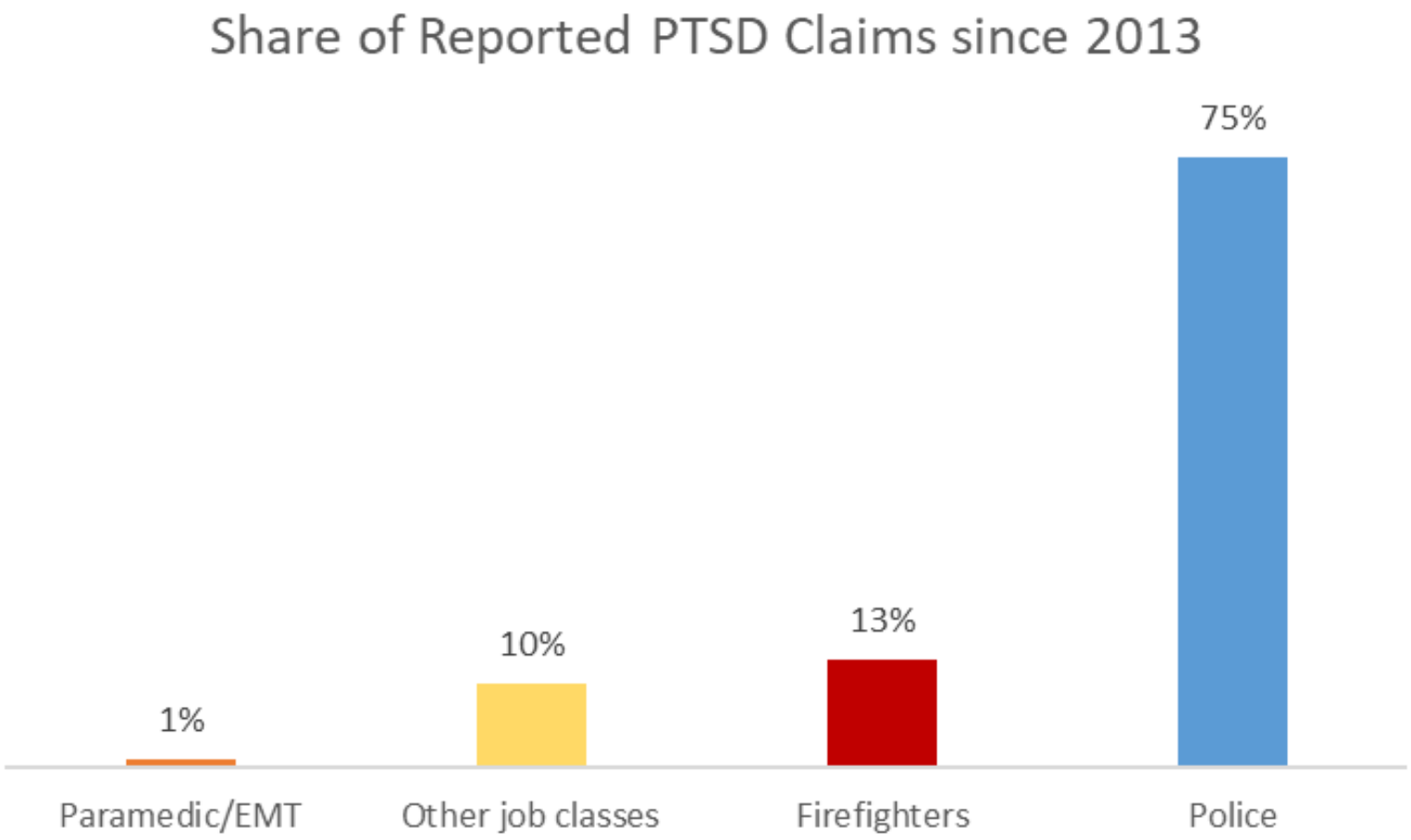
PTSD Claims History – Claim Counts



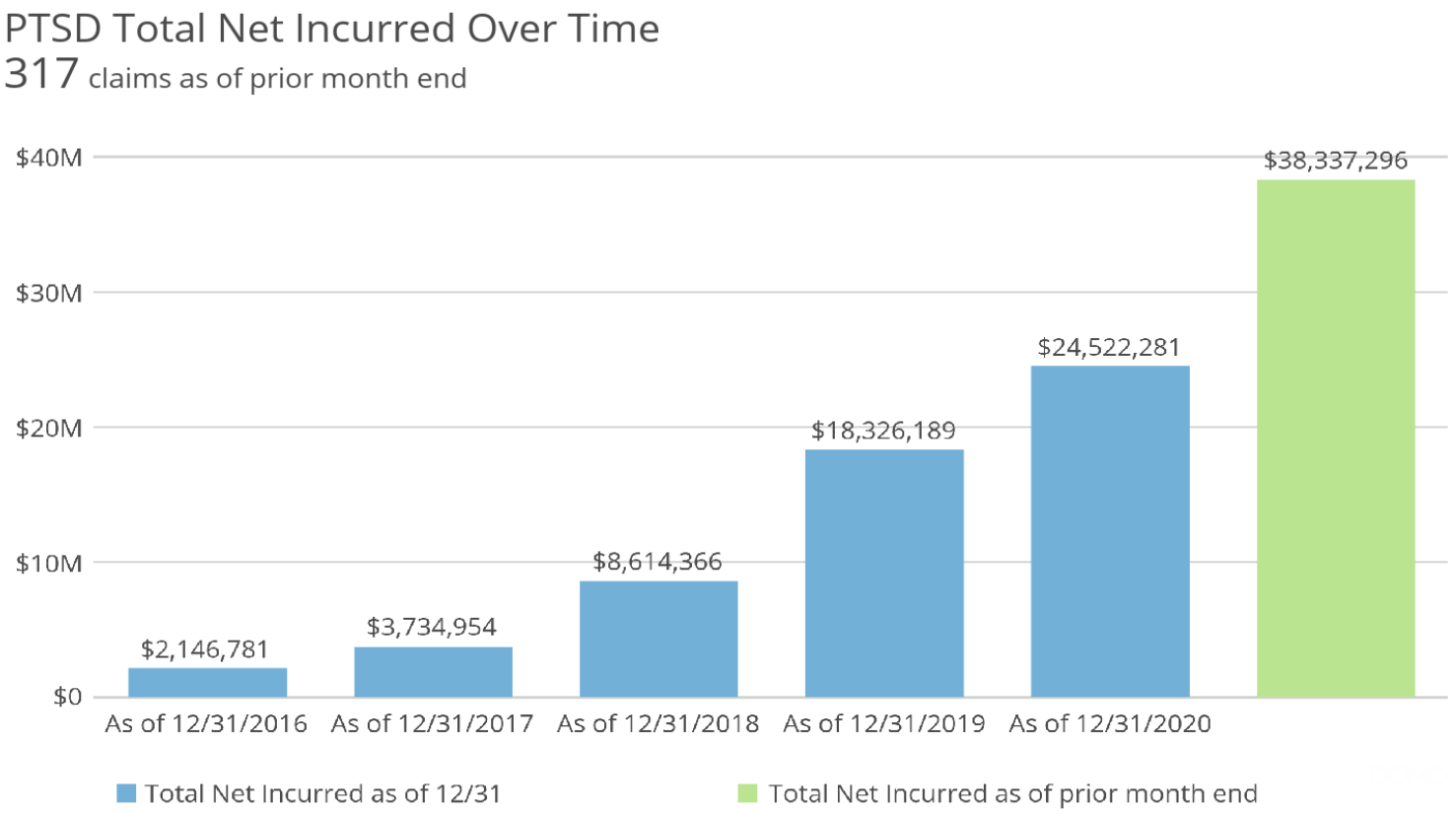
PTSD Claims Occur Statewide

Police	187
Fire	30
Other	19
Paramedic	1

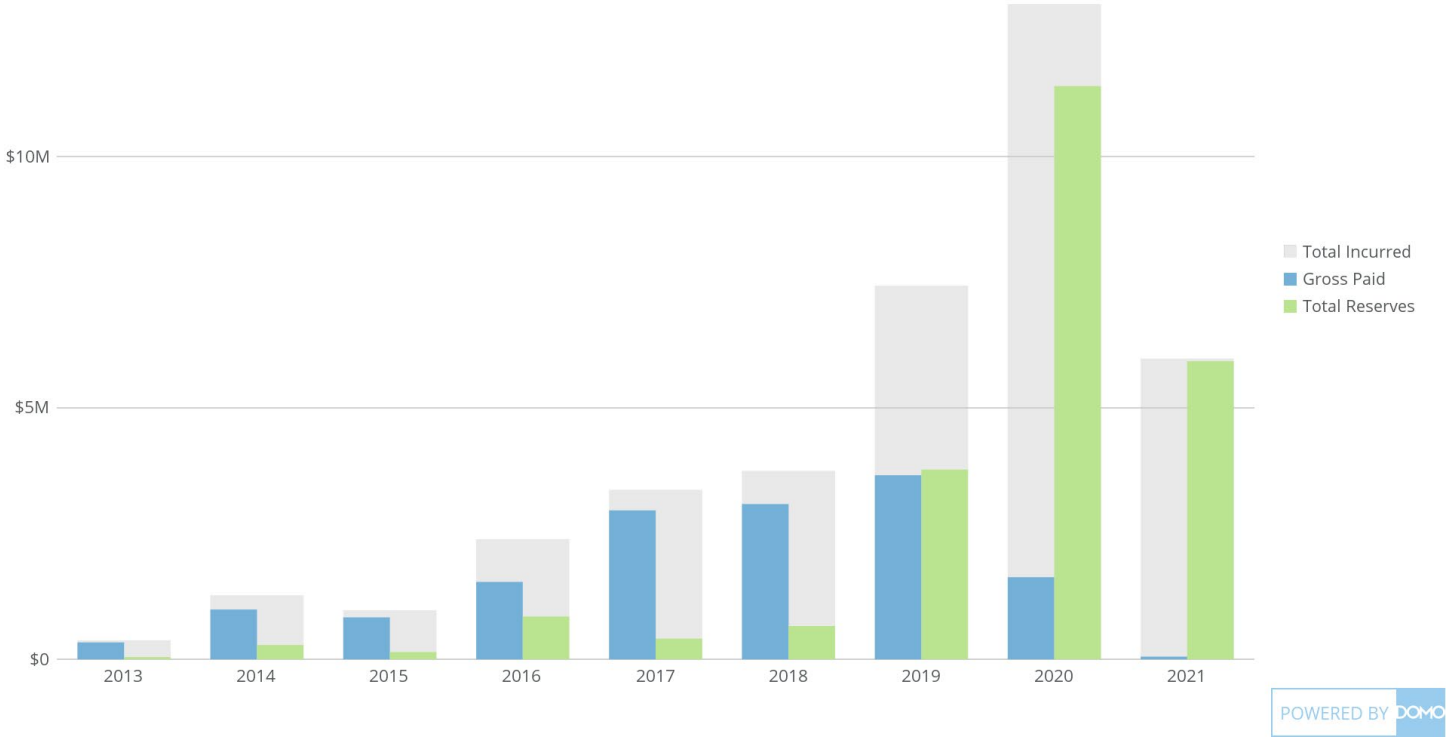



Share of Reported PTSD Claims since 2013
75%
13%
10%
1%
Paramedic/EMT
Other job classes
Firefighters
Police

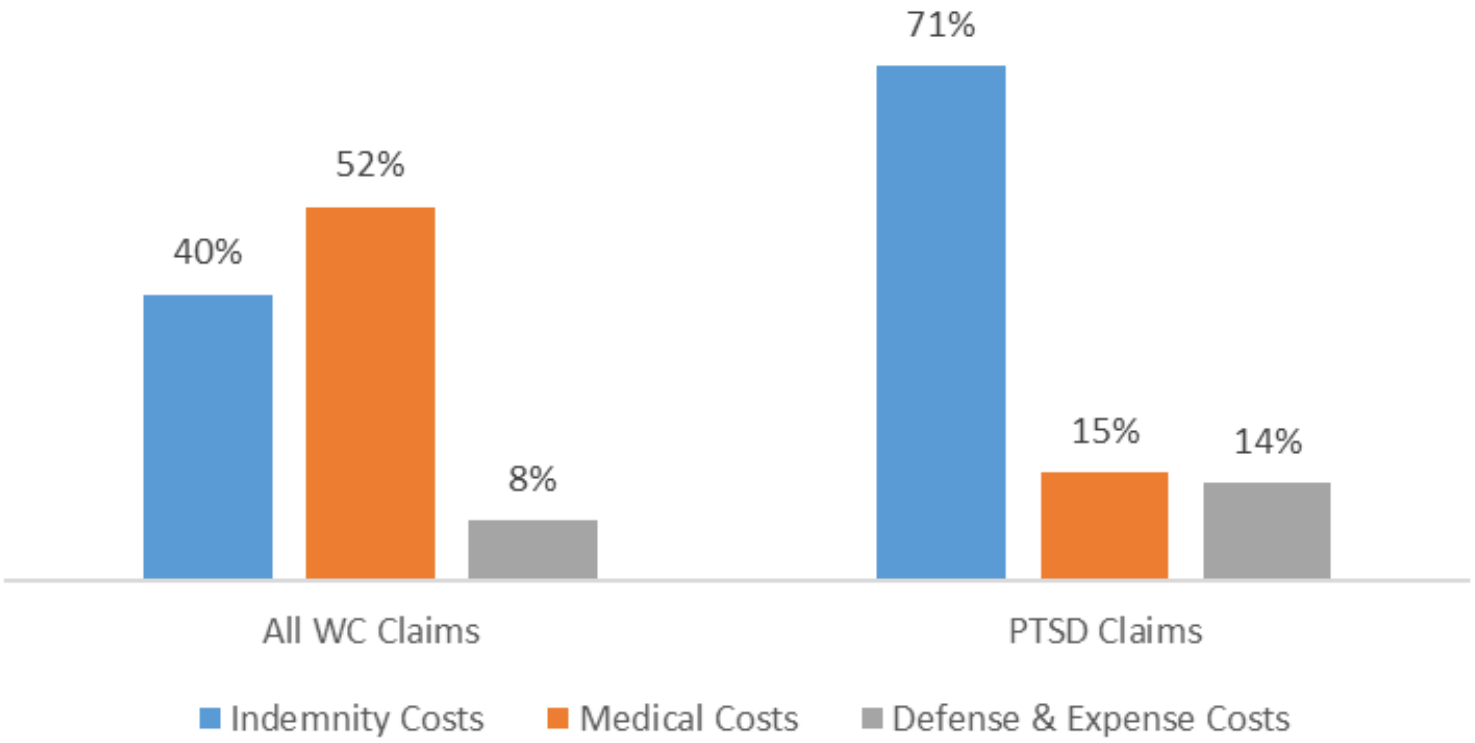
PTSD Claims History – Incurred Costs

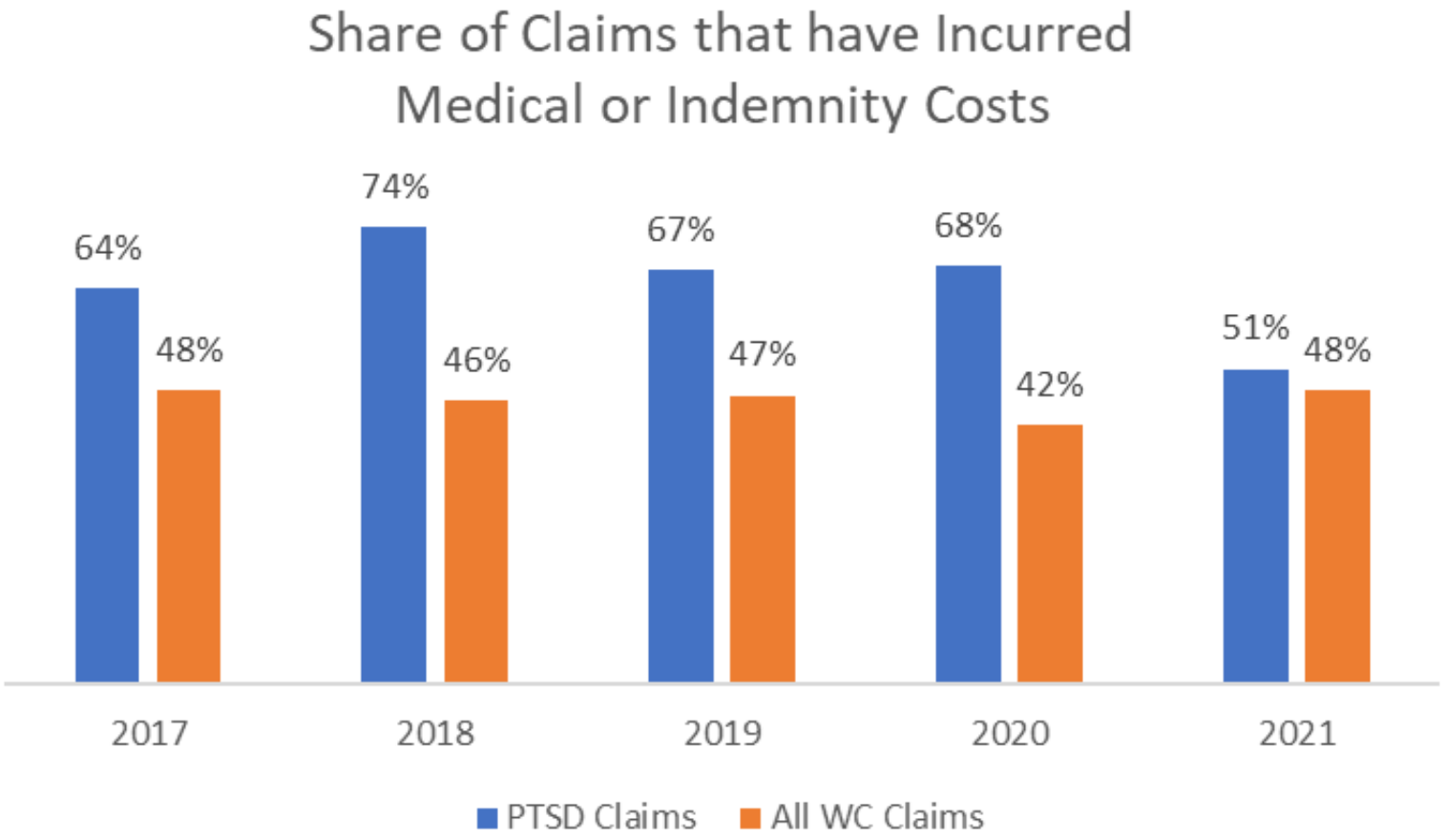


$15.08 Million total has been paid



Indemnity Costs are the largest share for PTSD Claims




Share of Claims that have Incurred Medical or Indemnity Costs
64%
48%
74%
46%
67%
47%
68%
42%
51%
48%
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
PTSD Claims
All WC Claims

Knowing more about claimants helps focus loss control efforts

42 years

average age at time of loss

AMHKmerd

44

claimants are known to have returned to work

30

Returned to a different job

14

Returned to the same job

13 years

Average length of service at time of loss

Strategy

- Education
- Legislation
- Research

Intergovernmental Relations Efforts

- Collaboration
- Education
- Advocacy



Collaboration

Public Safety Duty Disability Stakeholder Group Convened by the League



Association of Minnesota Counties

Law Enforcement Labor Services

League of Minnesota Cities

League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust

Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association

Minnesota City/County Management Association

Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Minnesota Inter-County Association

Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association

Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters Association

Minnesota Sheriff's Association

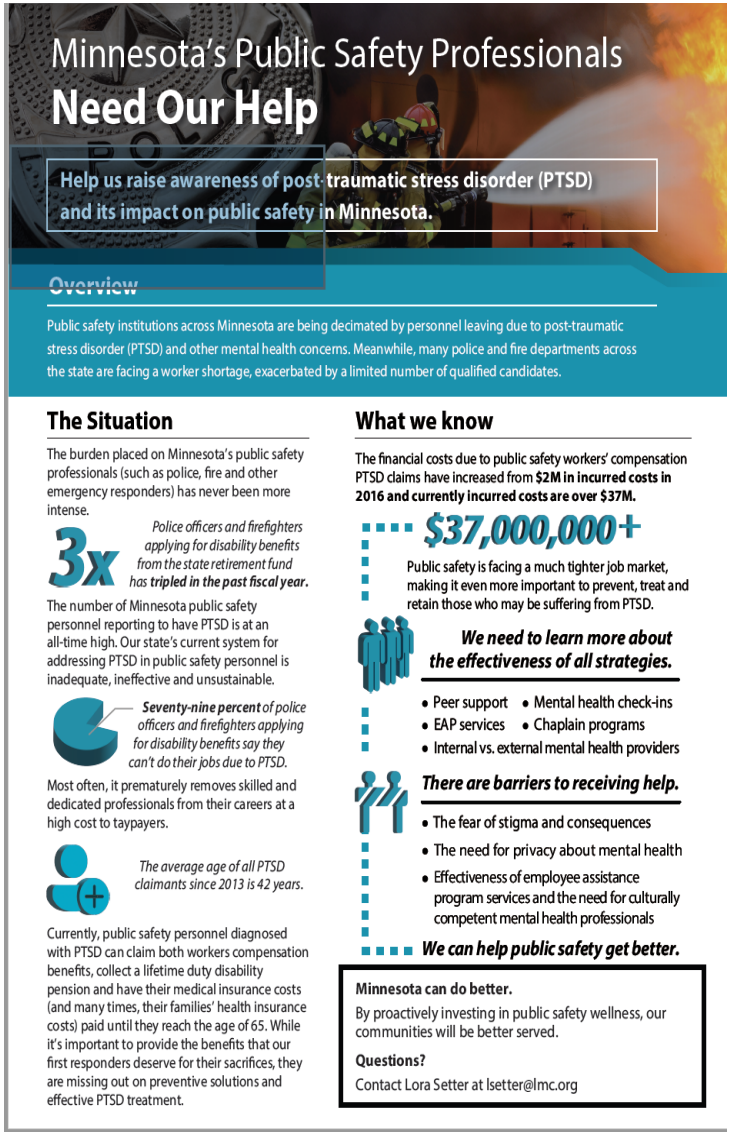
Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association

Minnesota State Fire Departments Association

Public Employees Retirement Association

Education

- Presented to Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA)
- Met with Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR) chairs
- Worked with Insurance Trust staff to
  develop materials illustrating issues
- Collaborating with Insurance Trust staff on awareness campaign



Minnesota's Public Safety Professionals
Need Our Help

Help us raise awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its impact on public safety in Minnesota.

Overview

Public safety institutions across Minnesota are being decimated by personnel leaving due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health concerns. Meanwhile, many police and fire departments across the state are facing a worker shortage, exacerbated by a limited number of qualified candidates.

The Situation

The burden placed on Minnesota's public safety professionals (such as police, fire and other emergency responders) has never been more intense.

3x — *Police officers and firefighters applying for disability benefits from the state retirement fund has* ***tripled in the past fiscal year.***

The number of Minnesota public safety personnel reporting to have PTSD is at an all-time high. Our state's current system for addressing PTSD in public safety personnel is inadequate, ineffective and unsustainable.

Seventy-nine percent *of police officers and firefighters applying for disability benefits say they can't do their jobs due to PTSD.*

Most often, it prematurely removes skilled and dedicated professionals from their careers at a high cost to taypayers.

The average age of all PTSD claimants since 2013 is 42 years.

Currently, public safety personnel diagnosed with PTSD can claim both workers compensation benefits, collect a lifetime duty disability pension and have their medical insurance costs (and many times, their families' health insurance costs) paid until they reach the age of 65. While it's important to provide the benefits that our first responders deserve for their sacrifices, they are missing out on preventive solutions and effective PTSD treatment.

What we know

The financial costs due to public safety workers' compensation PTSD claims have increased from **$2M in incurred costs in 2016 and currently incurred costs are over $37M.**

$37,000,000+

Public safety is facing a much tighter job market, making it even more important to prevent, treat and retain those who may be suffering from PTSD.

We need to learn more about the effectiveness of all strategies.

- Peer support
- Mental health check-ins
- EAP services
- Chaplain programs
- Internal vs. external mental health providers

There are barriers to receiving help.

- The fear of stigma and consequences
- The need for privacy about mental health
- Effectiveness of employee assistance program services and the need for culturally competent mental health professionals

We can help public safety get better.

Minnesota can do better.

By proactively investing in public safety wellness, our communities will be better served.

Questions?

Contact Lora Setter at lsetter@lmc.org

Advocacy



- **Chief authors:**
  - Sen. Jeff Howe (R-Rockville)
  - Rep. Jamie Long (DFL-Minneapolis)
- **Legislation in concept:**
  - Funding for prevention initiatives
  - State reimbursement for employers
  - Treatment before seeking benefits (funded by state)

Advocacy (continued)

Use the League's resources

- PTSD and Mental Health Toolkit
- Public Safety Duty Disability Policy
- 2022 Legislative Priorities
- Minnesota Cities Magazine Jan-Feb 2022 issue
- Advocacy Toolkit (coming soon)



Advocacy (continued)



Key messages

- **The problem is urgent.**
- **Current trends are unsustainable from both human and financial perspectives.**
- **This initiative is a way of supporting our public safety employees.**
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is treatable, and most employees can successfully return to work.**

Education



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LMCIT Wellness Program Position

- Peer Support
- Its Ok not to Be Okay
- Awareness Campaign

EDUCATION



- LMCIT PTSD Position Statement
- What Public Safety Leaders Should Know
- Survey of our Public Safety Leaders – Letter to Leaders
- Toolkit
- Wellness Pocket Guides
- Webinars – Presentations
- MN Cities Magazine Articles
- Peer Support Advisory Board
- Awareness Campaign

Why Peer Support?



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Peer Support Advisory Board

The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) Peer Support Advisory Board is composed of professionals from law enforcement, the fire service, and the mental health community.

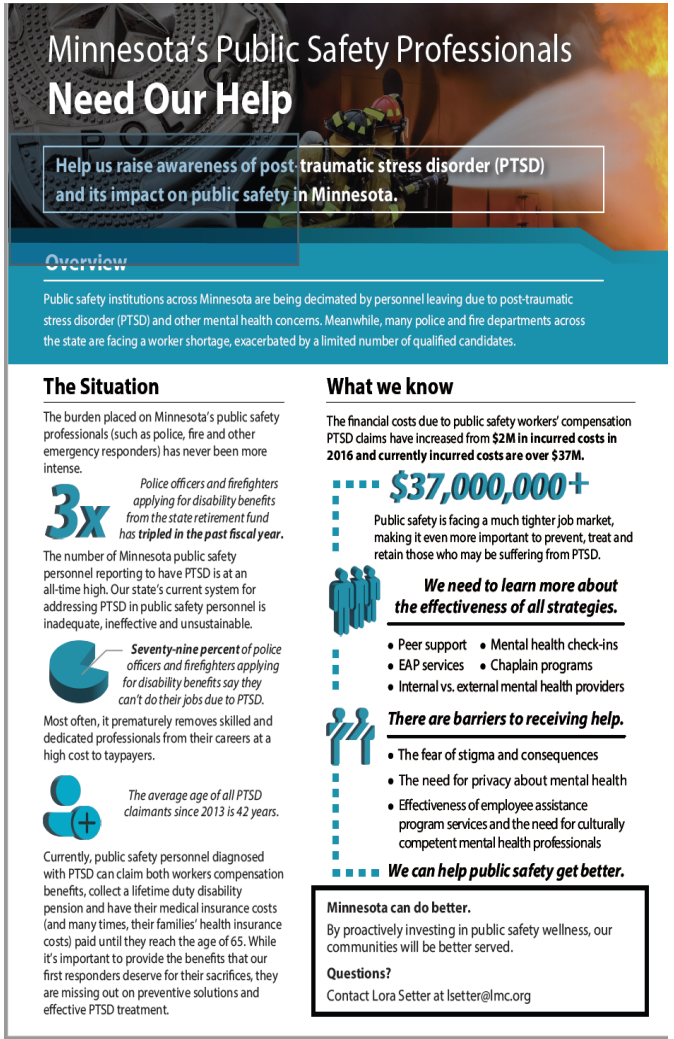
The Advisory Board provides recommendations and assists with the prioritization of LMCIT initiatives regarding peer support training requirements, peer support policies and procedures, core curriculum development, and program awareness.

Awareness Campaign

Letter was sent to 27 Organizations describing the problem

Ten Organizations including the League, are now part of the campaign.

1) League of MN Cities
2) Metro Cities
3) Minnesota Sheriff's Association
4) National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota
5) MN Small Cities
6) Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association
7) Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training
8) Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association
9) Minnesota Inter-County Association
10) Government Human Resource Professionals (TUG)



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Research

NLC

U of M

Benchmark

Police Officer Physical Abilities Test

WorkSTEPS and administered by NovaCare in most locations

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On the Horizon

- Cancer presumptions and public safety legislation

Questions?

