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**UCF RESTORES® Partners with Florida Firefighters  
to Strengthen Statewide PTSD Support Network**

**ORLANDO, Fla. (March 18, 2019)** – [UCF RESTORES](#), a leading independent research center devoted to revolutionizing the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), has partnered with the [Florida Firefighters Safety and Health Collaborative](#) (FFSHC) to serve as the collaborative’s committed partner for mental health and wellness. In addition to providing evidence-based research and ongoing institutional expertise, UCF RESTORES will play a crucial role in enhancing one of the collaborative’s anchor initiatives – the Redline Rescue model.

Redline Rescue was designed to take peer support to a new level. By leveraging a statewide network of trained firefighters to connect peers directly with one another, factoring in rank and level of experience, the FFSHC provides those in need with the necessary support to seek help for anxiety and other distressing symptoms that often accompany exposure to traumatic events.

As the FFSHC now represents more than 350 fire departments across the state, demand for support has continued to grow since the collaborative’s founding in 2016. Until now, assistance provided to support operations of the Redline Rescue model has relied on the tireless efforts of collaborative volunteers that remain available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to serve as the conduit between at-risk firefighters and the help they need.

“Matching effective, empathic peers and culturally aware clinicians with first responders in need has allowed us to support so many members of our collaborative family in their darkest hours. Automation of the Redline Rescue model will allow us to take an even more effective approach to providing tangible support, no matter the time of day,” said Dustin Hawkins, FFSHC mental wellness director. “We’re proud of our accomplishments, but we know we’ve only scratched the surface. With the help of UCF RESTORES, we will be able to build out the Redline Rescue program to better serve those in need and ultimately increase lives saved and reduce the number of flags folded on the caskets of our first responders.”

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The mental health and wellness partnership between the two entities marks a leap forward in offering the most effective evidence-based treatment to firefighters across the state as it opens doors for the FFSHC to the years of experience, research and data on peer support training programs that UCF RESTORES has compiled. As the partnership progresses, the collaborative will have ever-expanding opportunities to pull data and utilize algorithms developed for UCF RESTORES' [REACT Peer Support Training Program](#), which has seen widespread adoption and success throughout the state since its establishment in 2015, to further streamline and fully automate the Redline Rescue model, bringing its potential reach and impact to new heights.

“Our organization was founded on the goal of helping people reclaim control of their lives in the aftermath of trauma,” said UCF RESTORES Founder and Director Deborah Beidel, Ph.D., ABPP. “As we continue on our mission to be the first place the nation turns to for education and research on PTSD, we realize the need to align with partners that can connect us to those who are affected. Our relationship with the FFSHC serves as an invaluable pipeline to firefighters in Florida and beyond, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to serve those that devote their lives to serving others.”

The partnership between UCF RESTORES and the FFSHC is a definitive symbiotic relationship as both organizations strive to provide critical education, training and relief to behind-the-scenes heroes and bolster their passion for selfless service.

“Our professional partnerships have become personal relationships, and we are thrilled to welcome UCF RESTORES to the family,” Hawkins added. “This collaboration is a win-win; with our roster of firefighters and UCF RESTORES’ game-changing approach to treatment – the success of which we’ve seen firsthand – the foundation is laid for us to make a greater difference than ever before.”

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### **ABOUT UCF RESTORES®**

Established in 2011 on the core mission of restoring lives, families and communities, UCF RESTORES is working to change the way PTSD is understood, diagnosed and treated for active-duty military, first responders and survivors of mass shootings. The research center’s first-of-its-kind intensive outpatient program leverages a multidisciplinary treatment approach, incorporating exposure therapy, group treatment and new, emerging technologies to reduce the distressing symptoms that often accompany a traumatic event. This evidence-based treatment approach has seen unprecedented success, with 66 percent of participants with combat-related PTSD and 76 percent of first responders no longer meeting the diagnostic criteria for PTSD following treatment.

For more information, visit [www.ucfrestores.org](http://www.ucfrestores.org). Follow UCF RESTORES on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

To learn more about the Florida Firefighters Safety and Health Collaborative, please visit [www.floridafirefightersafety.org](http://www.floridafirefightersafety.org). Follow the collaborative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).