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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot
Announces New Wellness Initiative for DA Office Staffers**

The Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office is now partnering with F1RST, a comprehensive wellness initiative designed to tackle the repercussions of continuous stress exposure on the overall well-being, performance, and relationships of law enforcement members.

(Dallas, Texas) – In the world of law enforcement, it's common for professionals to describe what they do and face a natural follow-up question: "How does that affect you?" This is no different for prosecutors.

Over the years, prosecutors have been confronted with horrific facts and images depicting the most disturbing acts one human can inflict upon another. The demands of the job require prosecutors to walk in the footsteps of victims, see the events through the eyes of the first responders, and balance objectivity in the legal requirements to secure justice. We have found the combination of these stressors can affect an employee's daily life outside of work.

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office is committed to the health and wellness of its dedicated public servants and has taken proactive steps to address these stressors head-on. The office has contracted F1RST, a comprehensive wellness initiative designed to tackle the repercussions of continuous stress exposure on the overall well-being, performance, and relationships of law enforcement members.

This initiative was conceived by the DA's Office Wellness Committee, a collective of experienced prosecutors who possess firsthand knowledge of the profound toll that their profession can take on an individual. Each of the committee members deals with attorneys, investigators, and support staff in a supervisory capacity.

"Because of our roles, we each saw our team members struggling with the toll of vicarious trauma we endure in this profession. While we appreciate the Wellness Programs that the county conducts, we did not feel we had adequate resources that were specifically tailored to the type of work we do," explained Wellness Committee member and Misdemeanor Deputy Chief ADA Jennifer Morse. She continued, "Watching our victims die on video, hearing the screams of a victim as they are being attacked by an abuser, speaking to the loved ones of the deceased and shouldering their grief, and feeling the pressures of being the only conduit for justice for some of the families is a burden that few professions share."

District Attorney John Creuzot was swift in granting his approval and wholehearted support to this partnership.

“Part of running this office is caring for the people. We cannot do our jobs if our people, whether they be answering phones or prosecuting cases, are healthy both physically and mentally. I am so proud of this partnership and I know by strengthening their mental health, our staff will be even more equipped to see that justice is done in Dallas County,” said Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot.

As part of this initiative, every member of the DA's Office is now offered resiliency training, with each session carefully tailored to address the unique challenges of their specific roles within the office. Additionally, the culturally competent providers at F1RST can provide counseling and holistic treatment services, if needed, through the Dallas County benefits program.

“The goal is to provide not just mental and psychological services to our employees, but to give them access to nutritionists, physical and occupational therapists, and recovery specialists as well,” added Wellness Team Member and Chief of the Appellate Division ADA Jennifer Balido.

While the administration understands that this training will not eliminate the trauma experienced by our staff, it does provide a crucial outlet and equips employees with valuable tools to manage and openly discuss the effects of the hazardous aspects of their jobs.

“By learning the effects of vicarious trauma and chronic stress on the individual, providing resources to counteract or treat these effects, and continuing to seek out ways to enhance the well-being of our office members, we hope to become healthier and more effective in our pursuit of justice for the citizens of Dallas County,” said Wellness Team Member and Deputy Administrator ADA Lauren Black.

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ABOUT F1RST

F1RST (First Responder Stress & Trauma) is a Comprehensive Wellness Program addressing the impact of repeated stress exposure on a First Responder's Overall Health and Performance. F1RST's multidisciplinary team understands that the stress of first responder work is unique, and resiliency skills, support, and wellness training from a culturally competent professional are critical for overall health, quality of relationships, and occupational longevity. For more information on F1RST please visit: <https://www.htwedell.org/therapy>.