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NEWS RELEASE

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New Training Simulator Set To Transform How First Responders Handle Mental Health Crises

ARDMORE, OK – First responders in southern Oklahoma now have access to one of the state’s most advanced tools for safely navigating mental health emergencies thanks Lighthouse Behavioral Wellness Centers.

Lighthouse acquired a MILO immersive training simulator, one of only few like it in the state of Oklahoma. This cutting-edge simulation system offers life-like crisis scenarios designed to improve split-second decision-making and de-escalation tactics.

“This investment reflects our unwavering commitment to the safety of our communities and the well-being of our first responders,” said Jessica Pfau, Lighthouse CEO. “The MILO system helps prepare first responders for what they may face in the field—ensuring they are equipped not just with tactics, but with understanding and empathy.”

As part of the MILO training, first responders stand in front of a screen and “experience” a realistic, high-pressure simulations that teaches the officer how to respond with calm, clarity, and compassion during mental health crises. The simulator adapts to the officer’s responses, providing instant feedback on performance and evaluates body language, tone and emotional response.

“This technology offers an unmatched training opportunity,” said Eric Grisham, Lighthouse’s Law Enforcement Liaison. “Our goal is to give officers tools to de-escalate potentially volatile encounters while also gaining insight into trauma-informed responses.”

Acquiring the MILO system marks another significant milestone in Lighthouse’s Mental Wellness for First Responders program. The program offers a series of services to First Responders in Carter County.

Grisham works directly with first responders to conduct crisis response training, which now includes the MILO simulator, and peer support debriefings after crisis events. In addition, a specially trained Licensed Professional Counselor, Amy Hodges, provides mental health support for first responders in a completely confidential setting.

More than 40 officers in Carter County have worked with Amy, and the Ardmore Police Chief and the Carter County Sheriff have reported positive outcomes for their officers. "Through Amy's work, our ongoing training and now, the MILO simulator, we are building one of the most robust and effective programs to support first responders in the state," Grisham said. "Lighthouse cares greatly about these real life heroes and we will continue to support them in any way we can."

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About Lighthouse

Lighthouse Behavioral Wellness Centers is a non-profit organization. We are proud to be a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) and the designated Community Mental Health Center for nine counties in Southern Oklahoma. As a CCBHC, Lighthouse ensures access to comprehensive behavioral health services, which include, out-patient counseling, care coordination, addiction treatment and 24/7 crisis services. Lighthouse serves anyone who requests care for mental health and substance use, regardless of their ability to pay, place of residence or age.

