

MnFIRE 

# PROVIDER CONNECTIONS

## *Resources and Tools for the MnFIRE Assistance Program Network*

From Dr. Melinda R. Coscarelli –  
MnFIRE Medical Director, Mental Health

Hello, providers!

We're in the midst of summer and our busiest year yet at Minnesota Firefighter Initiative ([MnFIRE](#)). MnFIRE Assistance Program ([MAP](#)) provider visits are up 24% year to date compared to last year. We're so grateful that Minnesota's firefighters are finding and using the mental health support resources provided by the Hometown Heroes Assistance Program (HHAP).



As we provide mental health care for Minnesota's 20,000 volunteer, on-call, part-time and full-time firefighters and their families, it's crucial that we stay connected to our fellow colleagues and informed about the latest developments and support available to our clients. In this edition of our Provider Connections newsletter, you'll see several future training opportunities that provide us a time to come together, learn and grow in our practice.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and passion to serving our fire service. It's through our shared collaborative spirit that we continue to make meaningful strides in making a positive impact in the lives of firefighters and their families across the state.

I hope to see you soon!

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[Visit MnFIRE's Website](#)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OCTOBER 28 - 30, 2024

MARRCH Annual Conference & Expo  
Saint Paul RiverCentre

This is the annual conference and expo for Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH), with approximately 1,300 behavioral health professionals in attendance. The MARRCH annual conference attracts national and state speakers, while providing quality training opportunities for the full spectrum of professional

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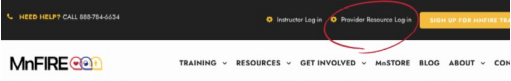
## Tools for Your Practice

### ACCELERATED RESOLUTION THERAPY (ART)

Have you been curious to learn more about [Accelerated Resolution Therapy](#), or ART? The ART modality can be very successful for firefighters as it helps clients reprogram distressing images and memories while reducing reactions to various triggers.


Now, Basic Accelerated Resolution Therapy® Training is available to MAP providers. [Julie Stender, LICSW](#), is offering training sessions to grow your ART practice. If you are interested in learning more contact Julie directly at [jrstender@gmail.com](mailto:jrstender@gmail.com) or click the button below.

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Want more free resources to better serve firefighters and their families? Check out the provider resources page on the [MnFIRE website](#).

MAP providers can click on the “provider resource log-in” button linked in the header. Simply enter your name and email to access the page.



## Utilize the Peer Support Network

Firefighters are exposed to traumatic stress at particularly high rates and getting help from someone who has lived similar experiences can make all the difference. Please utilize [MnFIRE's Peer Support Network](#) to complement the work you are doing in your sessions with firefighters and their families. This confidential service is free to all Minnesota firefighters and offers them the unique opportunity to connect and converse with someone who has been through similar experiences. By providing emotional support outside of the traditional medical system, peer support directly reduces the culture of silence in the fire service that has all too often resulted in worsening mental health and suicide.



### Meet a peer supporter: Kyle

Kyle Bode has been in the fire service more than 20 years and he's a proud MnFIRE peer supporter. We sat down with Kyle to hear more about his experience with [MnFIRE Peer Support](#) and how he shows up for fellow firefighters by offering a listening ear.

***Tell us a little about yourself, your history with the fire service and who you are outside of your role as a firefighter.***

I was recruited by Saint Paul Fire Department's fire chief at the gym. I had completed active-duty military and I was going to college and working at the gym. I had no clue what I was going to do. It sounded interesting so I applied for the upcoming Saint Paul test. I really didn't expect to get hired. I remember taking the written test with 3,500 people at the RiverCentre and feeling like I didn't have a chance. I was hired in the first class off of that list. While I waited for the academy, I was hired as a volunteer for the White Bear Lake Fire Department, where I served for a little over a year. I also served as an Air Force Reserve firefighter for 16 years and retired from the military in 2022.



I live in Blaine with my wife and four kids, ages 4, 8, 12 and 13. Outside of the fire department, most of my time is spent with my family. My wife owns a dance studio, so that also keeps me busy. I enjoy physical challenges and have competed in many marathons, a couple of Ironman Triathlons and also some long-distance rucking events. I prioritize my physical health because it helps me a lot with my mental health.

***Why did you become a MnFIRE peer supporter?***

I spent several years struggling with my mental health and substance abuse. In 2022, I checked into a first responder treatment facility where I was treated for alcohol abuse and PTSD. I learned so much during that time including better ways to keep myself healthy both mentally and physically. It didn't take me long to realize that I wasn't alone. Once I was able to get myself in a healthier space, I realized many of my peers were having similar struggles. In my experience, it is tremendously helpful to be able to talk to another person who has gone through what you are going through, so I pursued becoming a MnFIRE peer supporter.

***What is the most rewarding part of being a peer supporter?***

I think just being there for another person, so they don't feel like they are going through it alone. It's also extremely rewarding to witness and be a part of someone's journey to feeling better and finding a healthier place in their life.

***What is the most surprising part of being a peer supporter?***

Unfortunately, I think the most surprising part for me has been witnessing firsthand how many of my peers are struggling. There is a silver lining though, because I have been able to witness some pretty incredible change during that time.

***What do you see as the most valuable component of the MnFIRE [Hometown Heroes Assistance Program](#)?***

The program helps remove a lot of barriers. It makes it much easier for those who need help to get the help. I have sat with peers who have called the hotline and have gotten set up with a therapist, for free, that same day. MnFIRE has done the work and vetted the mental health professionals, so you get connected with the right person. I have used the HHAP and I find it very helpful.

***What two suggestions would you share with every Minnesota firefighter to improve their mental health?***

I think the most important thing that I would share is that it's OK to ask for help. We all sign up to do this dangerous job, but the bravest individuals that I have seen are the ones who admit that they are not OK and need help. I also think it's important to make diet and exercise a priority. I can't stress enough how much it helps with our mental health. It's the

number-one medicine for our well-being, and it's free!

*Anything else you'd like to add?*

In the span of eight years, I tragically lost two of my brothers from the Saint Paul Fire Department to suicide. This heart-wrenching experience underscores the urgent need for anyone grappling with their mental health to reach out for help. Remember, you are not alone. Your loved ones and those around you genuinely care and want to support you. Don't hesitate to seek assistance.

*Help is just a call away*

[MnFIRE Peer Support](#) is a safe, confidential space for your client to connect with someone who has lived the same experience. Minnesota firefighters and their family members can reach free peer support by calling the MnFIRE 24-hour helpline at **888-784-6634**.

## Hometown Heroes Assistance Program Elements



- Up to 5 no-cost yearly personal and confidential sessions with trained professionals.
- Can be matched with a trained peer supporter.
- If you are in crisis or need support, call 1-888-784-6634 or visit [mnfireinitiative.com](http://mnfireinitiative.com).



- A free insurance policy providing up to \$20,000 towards expenses after a diagnosis of cancer, cardiac or other critical illness.
- To file a claim, call 1-888-784-6634 or visit [mnfireinitiative.com](http://mnfireinitiative.com).



- Ongoing, free annual training to keep you up to date on occupational health risks.
- Basic awareness training and deep-dive sessions covering cancer, emotional trauma, cardiac, nutrition and family.
- Sign up at [mnfiretraining.org](http://mnfiretraining.org).

## Claim Reminders

- MAP providers will receive a premium reimbursement rate for eligible services.
- Optum pays providers directly – no patient financial responsibility.
- All MAP claims must include an HJ modifier.
- Claims must also include the 9-digit member ID and authorization number.
- Claims can be submitted at [providerexpress.com](http://providerexpress.com).
- Providers participating in the MAP network will be reimbursed premium rates for the service codes below *only if* the Minnesota firefighters and their families are *offered an appointment within five business days of request*.

SERVICE CODE	SERVICE TITLE/ DESCRIPTION	FEE: PHD	FEE: MAA
90832HJ	30-37 min individual therapy	\$125	\$125

90834HJ	38-52 min individual therapy	\$125	\$125
90846HJ	Family therapy without patient in attendance	\$125	\$125
90847HJ	Family therapy with the patient in attendance	\$125	\$125
90853HJ	Group therapy other than family	\$125	\$125

\*\* Please note that extended therapy visits code (90837) and formal diagnostic assessments code (90791) are not covered for MAP.

## Helpful Authorization Tips

- Authorization letters are sent to the individual via email or USPS mail. Ask the member for this information.
- Verify authorization details via our Authorization Inquiry tool at [providerexpress.com](http://providerexpress.com).
- Call Optum MAP for assistance (1-866-694-9662).

## Important Contacts

**MnFIRE Hotline:** 1-888-784-6634

1 – MAP (Firefighter/Family Access)

2 – Peer Support

3 – Critical Illness Insurance

4 – Cardiac & Cancer

5 – Provider Authorization Hotline (Note: this option is not announced on the greeting)

**Authorization Hotline:** 1-866-694-9662

**Provider Questions:** [emily.schumacher@optum.com](mailto:emily.schumacher@optum.com)

## About MnFIRE

MnFIRE is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to providing education and support for firefighters and their families with regard to cardiac, emotional trauma and cancer, achieving better health outcomes. For more information, visit [mnfireinitiative.com](http://mnfireinitiative.com).



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