

CHP chief wants more mental health training for officers

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Joe Farrow had it right Wednesday morning when he said, "Everybody in this room knows we have an issue to work on. A big issue."

The CHP commissioner uttered those words before kicking off a five-hour meeting to talk about mental-health training for police. More than 100 experts and advocates, lawmakers and legislative staff, public health officials, family members and police officers from around the state gathered at the patrol's North Sacramento headquarters.

It's not a coincidence that Farrow wants CHP to take the lead. Last July, a motorist shot video of CHP Officer Daniel Andrew straddling 51-year-old Marlene Pinnock on the ground and repeatedly striking her. The pictures of a young white officer beating a mentally confused African American grandmother grabbed national attention.

Farrow shuttled back and forth from Sacramento to Southern California to make amends with local politicians and civil-rights activists. He didn't hide his embarrassment. He apologized. He promised to investigate. He vowed to change how his officers deal with the mentally ill.

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