

## **NHLPA AND KEVIN BIEKSA CREATE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS VIDEO FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING**

*Video has already been utilized by the LAPD for mental health training*

TORONTO (March XX, 2018) – The National Hockey League Players’ Association (NHLPA) and NHLPA member Kevin Bieksa are pleased to announce the release of a video focused on mental health awareness, which was prepared for use in law enforcement training – and has already been utilized by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

In the video, Bieksa talks about his late friend, NHL player Rick Rypien, and his struggles with mental health while conveying how difficult it was to understand what Rypien was going through. Bieksa also expressed that he has learned how challenging, but extremely important it is to help those who may need it.

“My personal experience simply says help them, give them the benefit of the doubt – partner, teammate, friends – take the time to listen to hear what they’re trying to say. And when the time comes, accept a responsibility to help them, or to get them help.”

Bieksa offers that while he does not claim to be an expert on the subject, he understands the importance of having an open conversation.

To watch the full video, [click here](#).



Bieksa has long been a strong advocate for mental health awareness and support. This video is a re-creation of a speech he made in 2013 while playing for the Vancouver Canucks, which encouraged people to talk about their situation and seek help when it is needed. The LAPD showed Bieksa’s speech during educational seminars with their officers. Television producer Robin Lecky suggested that he could work with Bieksa on producing a new mental health awareness video to address, specifically, first responders throughout North America. Bieksa

brought the idea for the video to the NHLPA in the fall of 2017, and the parties then worked together to film, edit and finalize the project from October through December.

### Quote from Devin Smith/ NHLPA

Following completion of this mental health awareness video, the LAPD was the first to use it as an educational tool during training of their officers. The video has received positive responses from trainers and students alike, and it is available for any law enforcement agency or mental health program to utilize. The goal is for the video to be used by other law enforcement agencies and any organization looking to provide a different perspective while furthering the conversation on mental health.

“The LAPD opens its four-day Mental Health Intervention Training with the video, which sets the tone for the week. It’s about taking ownership and making a commitment to each other’s mental health. We are grateful for the collaboration and the commitment of Kevin Bieksa and the National Hockey League Players’ Association. Together we can make a difference,” said Charles Lennon, Mental Health Clinical Program Head, County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health. “Our police and mental health co-responder teams, throughout Los Angeles County, will greatly benefit from Kevin’s story and his personal witness in helping those suffering from mental illness. We salute his courage and generosity in helping others.”

The Anaheim Ducks supported this mental health awareness video by providing the filming for its creation, while the footage was provided as a courtesy by the Canucks.

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### **About the NHLPA:**

The National Hockey League Players’ Association (NHLPA), established in 1967, is a labour organization whose members are the players in the National Hockey League (NHL). The NHLPA works on behalf of the players in varied disciplines such as labour relations, product licensing, marketing, international hockey and community relations, all in furtherance of its efforts to promote its members and the game of hockey. The NHLPA Goals & Dreams fund was launched in 1999 as a way for the players to give something back to the game they love. Over the past 18 years, more than 70,000 deserving children in 34 countries have benefited from the players’ donations of hockey equipment. NHLPA Goals & Dreams has donated more than \$24 million to grassroots hockey programs, making it the largest program of its kind. For more information on the NHLPA, please visit [www.nhlpa.com](http://www.nhlpa.com).

### **About RB Ventures:**

Robin Lecky has produced and directed major film, entertainment and special event projects in Canada, the United States and internationally. Lecky’s recent credits include Co-Producer of the 60-minute documentary feature, “Scout’s Honour: The Mel Didier Story;” writer of the two-part documentary series, “Connor McDavid: Transitions”; and Supervising Producer of CBC television’s “Canadian Screen Awards” live national broadcast. He has directed marketing and event projects for non-profit organizations, including the American Museum of Natural History,

the Smithsonian Institution, Gettysburg National Park, the Ford Museum and the Museum of Civilization.

**About the Los Angeles Police Department Mental Evaluation Unit:**

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has implemented several complementary program responses to address the complex mental health needs within its jurisdiction. Since 1993, LAPD's mental evaluation unit has trained personnel from law enforcement across California, as well as personnel in Canada, Australia, Belgium and the United Kingdom. For over four decades, the LAPD has deployed the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) to assist police officers with mental health calls for service. The MEU conducts or distributes training courses throughout the year, through the classroom; e-learning; and tele-course. The County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health has been partnering with the LAPD MEU for 25 years, assisting patrol officers in their interactions with persons suffering from severe and persistent mental illness. For information regarding Mental Health Resources in LA County, please visit <http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh>.

For interview requests and inquiries about use of the video, please contact:

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