



News Release

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The Wallow Fire forced more evacuations Tuesday evening as it quickly spread to 389,000 acres, larger than the area of the city of Phoenix.

Despite thick ominous smoke blanketing the area Tuesday night, staff from Northern Arizona Regional Behavioral Health Authority (NARBHA) and Little Colorado Behavioral Health Centers (LCBHC) created a make-shift camp at the Springerville office. Staff is providing mental wellness to other would-be evacuees, as well as the law enforcement and fire crews who have been battling the Wallow Fire since last Sunday. "It is important that personnel who are on the frontlines are cared for physically and emotionally so they are able in turn, to provide their best efforts in fighting this battle" accounts Christina Mencuccini, Director of Communications for NARBHA.

Amid rolling blackouts and thick smoke, staff provide critical incident stress management (CISM) and debriefing (CISD) to those in need during the Wallow Fire. "This is not counseling, but a mechanism for people to talk about their experience and unload their stress in order to re-engage" explains Michael Downs, CEO of Little Colorado "It's important that they function in the right state of mind, so they can work effectively."

CISM/CISD is a common tool used in the military, law enforcement, and emergency services to help personnel work through the most stressful of situations. Personnel have been battling the Wallow Fire for 11 days now, and as zero-percent containment is reported once again Wednesday morning, the stress continues to build. With 2 tankers and 14 helicopters expected to fly today until the winds kick up, there is hope that crews will gain the upper hand this morning on the Wallow Fire.

For more information, please contact Christina Mencuccini, NARBHA Director of Communications/PIO, at 928-380-4004 or christina.mencuccini@narbha.org.