

### Problem Statement

Adults spend approximately 1/3 of their time at work.<sup>1</sup> The workplace can provide personal and professional fulfillment, as well as work-related stress. That stress can increase the risk of developing or exacerbating mental health conditions. In the workplace mental health conditions can create obstacles for individuals to thrive in their job, and affect overall productivity.<sup>1</sup>

Research suggests that absenteeism and loss of productivity at work due to depressive disorders costs approximately \$10.2 billion annually.<sup>2</sup> Employees experiencing depression miss between 6 and 25 more days per year than those without depression. Productivity losses are the most significant driver of these costs, and individuals with mental health conditions suffer from impaired performance during 13 percent to 29 percent of work time.<sup>3,4,5,6</sup> The costs incurred by businesses and organizations as the result of treated and untreated mental disorders among employees are high, rising, and the *single most expensive category of health costs incurred across all industries*.<sup>1,7</sup>

The prevalence of stigma, social prejudice and discrimination against persons with mental health needs, combined with lack of treatment, and ineffective workplace responses increases employer costs, through missed work, impaired performance, medical costs, caregiving, turnover, disability, and other associated challenges.

Nearly one in five Americans live with a mental health condition, including addiction, yet there are no well-established, agreed upon standards for workplace mental health in the U.S. to guide public and private organizations on how to increase mental health awareness in the workplace, respond to needs, or support prevention and recovery strategies.

### Project Goal

Senate Bill 1113 (Monning) in 2018 directed the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission to establish a framework and voluntary standard for mental health in the workplace. That strategy is intended to reduce mental health stigma, increase public, employee, and employer awareness of the significance of mental health, and create avenues to treatment, support and recovery.

Goals for this project include:

- Explore current practices in workplace mental health in the U.S. and abroad;
- Identify cost-effective practices for workplace mental health that are aligned with employee and employer needs;
- Provide a framework to organizations for creating policies and processes to address mental health in the workplace;
- Assess the utility of developing a certification strategy to support the adoption of the voluntary standards for workplace mental health;
- Support public and private collaboration relative to workplace mental health initiatives;

- Explore incentives for public and private organizations to prioritize and implement mental healthcare in the workplace approaches.

## Project Structure

The Commission created a committee of Commissioners to lead the project, which includes Commissioners Keyondria Bunch, PhD (Project Chair) and Mara Madrigal-Weiss. The committee will engage with employers and employees, subject matter experts, mental health consumers, human resources professionals, and others to support development of the standards.

The project is envisioned to include:

- Commission Meetings: Public hearings, will include presentations by subject matter experts on existing approaches to workplace mental health, employers, human resources experts, mental health experts, and others.
- Committee Meetings: A series of meetings to engage subject matter experts and stakeholders to explore topics will be organized throughout the state.
- Site Visits: Site visits will be organized to support the development of foundational knowledge regarding best practices for workplace mental health.
- Research, policy review, and explore similar efforts in the states and other countries.

## Project Schedule

Fall 2019:	Committee Meeting Begin research, policy review and data collection
Winter 2019:	Committee Meeting
Winter 2020:	Public Hearing
Spring 2020:	Committee Meeting Final Data Collection
Summer 2020:	Committee Meeting Standards Development
Fall 2020:	Commission to consider adopting Voluntary Workplace Mental Health Standards

## REFERENCES

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