



## National Lieutenant Governors Association

### NLGA Consensus Resolution Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace

**WHEREAS**, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, mental health conditions affect approximately 21% or more than 50 million Americans, with recent reports showing a sharp increase in symptoms of anxiety and depression, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>1,2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, more than half of adults with mental health conditions do not receive treatment and 42% reported they were unable to afford treatment,<sup>3,4</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, untreated mental health conditions in the workplace can negatively affect employee performance, absenteeism, and overall well-being, leading to decreased productivity and increased healthcare costs for employers,<sup>5</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, individuals facing mental health challenges are more likely to exit the workforce, contributing to job vacancies and economic strain,<sup>6</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, employees increasingly value workplaces that support mental health and prioritize mental well-being, which is essential to retaining and attracting talent,<sup>7</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, there is a recognized shortage of mental health providers across the country, with an estimated 350 individuals for every one mental health provider, and with significant disparities in access to mental health care for underserved communities, including minority groups and rural populations,<sup>8</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, workplaces can have a crucial role in promoting mental health and creating environments that support the well-being of their employees, and

**WHEREAS**, state policymakers can take action to improve access to mental health care and support mental wellbeing in the workplace through several actions, as attached.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/news/lack-of-access-root-cause-mental-health-crisis-in-america/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/labor-and-employment/mental-health-matters-policy-framework-on-workforce-mental-health>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-at-work>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mhanational.org/news/2024-state-of-mental-health-report>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mhanational.org/news/2024-state-of-mental-health-report>

32 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Lieutenant Governors Association  
33 encourages state policymakers to consider actions to improve access to mental health care and  
34 support mental wellbeing in the workplace.

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36 ADOPTED, this day, the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 2024.

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38 *Proposed for the docket by:* The State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), NLGA Partner

**NLGA Consensus Resolution Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace –  
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS:**

**1. Ensuring Parity in Mental Health Treatment:**

- Adopting laws that mandate health insurance plans to provide equal coverage for mental health treatment and other medical treatments.
- Expanding mental health coverage under workers' compensation and short- and long-term disability programs to include psychological trauma related to work.

**2. Supporting Employee Well-Being in the Workplace:**

- Encouraging self-assessment and self-disclosure and passing state law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of mental health disability in employment and requires reasonable accommodations.
- Enacting workplace policies that allow the use of sick leave and family leave for mental health diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.
- Offering job rehabilitation, job retention, and maintenance benefits and services to employees with short- or long-term mental health disabilities.
- Offering mental health training, such as Mental Health First Aid, to employers and employees to create supportive and informed workplace environments.
- Promoting employer and employee awareness of reasonable accommodations, including telecommuting, for employees with mental health conditions.
- Encouraging employers to adopt Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to provide confidential support to employees experiencing mental health challenges.
- Offering state workplace wellness programs that cover mental health services.
- Promoting drug-free workplace strategies that include prevention, detection and treatment components.

**3. Addressing Disparities in Mental Health Access:**

- Establishing state task forces or offices dedicated to examining and reducing mental health care disparities, particularly in underserved racial, ethnic, and rural communities.
- Collecting data and adopting policies to address health care disparities and social determinants of health.
- Supporting telehealth services to enhance access to mental health care, especially for remote and underserved populations.

- Encouraging insurance carriers, hospitals, and mental health professionals to offer and participate in training to meet the cultural needs of diverse residents.
- Establishing peer- and community-driven programs that provide culturally specific and responsive behavioral health services to underserved communities.
- Expanding funding, developing programs, and/or providing incentives to improve access to culturally responsive behavioral health services for underserved communities.
- Expanding broadband access in rural areas to facilitate tele-mental health services.

#### **4. Enhancing the Behavioral Health Workforce:**

- Increasing funding for the recruitment and training of mental health professionals, with a focus on diversifying the workforce to reflect the populations served.
- Prioritizing scholarship and loan forgiveness programs for individuals pursuing behavioral health careers, particularly those pursuing practice in areas of greatest need.
- Establishing mental health hotlines for groups such as behavioral health care workers and frontline workers.
- Joining interstate compacts to allow licensed mental health professionals to practice across state lines, helping to alleviate provider shortages.
- Evaluating behavioral health licensing requirements to reduce barriers and promote alternative pathways to the profession.
- Promoting peer support and community-based mental health services as part of an integrated behavioral health strategy.
- Establishing behavioral health crisis service systems and mechanisms for diversion from court systems.
- Creating mechanisms to fund 988 implementation and call center hubs and the technology platforms that operate and support them.