

# WORKFORCE MENTAL HEALTH

## OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE THE BUSINESS CLIMATE

Kentucky is considered to have one of the unhealthiest populations in the U.S. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 746,000 adults in Kentucky have a mental health condition. Additionally, a 2019 report from the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions noted that mental health and substance use disorders cost employers nearly \$225.8 billion each year. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Kentucky's 2nd leading cause of death among those 18-34 and the 4th leading cause among those 35-44 years of age is suicide. These health conditions significantly impact the business community by harming workforce participation and increasing employers' productivity and healthcare costs.

## APPROACH TO TACKLE THE ISSUE

The NKY Chamber supports improved and ongoing collaborative efforts among local, state, and federal elected officials, public health officials, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and employers to ensure that resources are available to address the growing need for mental and behavioral health, addiction, and other health conditions by:

- Creating Workplace Wellness Program Incentives
- Integrating Behavioral and Primary Care Health Services
- Addressing the Provider Shortage
- Removing barriers to licensed and certified mental health professionals that prevent them from working in Kentucky
- Ensure adequate Medicaid reimbursement rates and remove unnecessary bureaucracy impacting mental health services

## WHY DOES IT MATTER TO MY BUSINESS

Poor behavioral health among our population harms the workforce participation rate.

Hampers employers' ability to hire and retain a healthy and productive workforce.

Increases employers' health care and lost productivity costs.

## WHAT WE ARE ASKING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL TO DO

Encourage and incentivize private and public wellness programs to emphasis prevention and prompt workers to improve their mental health.

Support increased allocation of resources for mental health treatment, research, and programs that provide treatment alternatives to incarceration for those suffering from substance abuse disorders and mental and behavioral health disorders.

Address the mental and behavioral health care provider shortage by funding the creation of mental health professional scholarships, new residency programs, apprenticeship programs, and on-the-job training programs.

Support measures to allow some mental and behavioral health care services, such as telehealth services, to be exempt from high deductible health plan rules, thus mitigating some portion of the costs of such services for Kentuckians.

Remove barriers to licensed and certified mental health professionals from working in Kentucky.

Ensure adequate Medicaid reimbursement rates and other funding for mental health treatments for Kentuckians.