CITY OF HAMILTON
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
Human Resources

TO:	Chair and Members Audit Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 19, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016 – 2018) (HUR16006) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rob Burwash, Director, Employee Health and Labour Relations (905) 546-2424 ext. 2655 Dave Lindeman, Manager, Health, Safety and Wellness (905) 546-2424 ext. 5657 Miri Freimanis, Healthy Workplace Specialist (905) 546-2424 ext. 7141
SUBMITTED BY: **SIGNATURE:**	Lora Fontana, Associate Executive Director, Human Resources and Organizational Development

RECOMMENDATION

That Council support the Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016 -2018) for the City of Hamilton.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Creating a Workplace that Promotes Mental Health and Wellbeing: Why It Matters

Mental health is fundamental to overall health. A workplace that supports mental health and wellbeing is respectful and supportive of its employees. Workplace mental health promotion, prevention and anti-stigma initiatives, training for management and employee assistance programs, all have a role to play in maintaining mental health and wellbeing. Our goal is to promote mental health and prevent mental illness.

Mental illness affects all Canadians at some point in their lifetime, either directly or indirectly, or through a family member, friend or colleague. In any given year, it is estimated that one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health problem. The total becomes about one in three if those suffering from addictions are included. The World Health Organization predicts that by 2020, the second most common disability after heart disease will be depression. Due to its prevalence, mental illness is one of the most pervasive and difficult workplace issues faced by employers today.

The cost of ignoring workplace mental health issues can be seen in:
• Poorer physical health
• Disengaged employees
• Higher benefits costs
• Increased absenteeism

Workplace issues that affect mental health include, for example:
• Harassment, violence, bullying
• Work overload
• Stigma and discrimination

The Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy is built on important resources, supports, programs and initiatives already in place. Some examples are:
• Bullying and harassment prevention policies
• Chronic pain support program
• Resiliency workshops
• Departmental Wellness Committees
• Sprout physical activity and mental health tracker
• Our Employee and Family Assistance Program
• Mental Health@Work Certificate Training for Leaders
• Critical Incident Peer Support team
• Flexible work arrangements including telecommuting
• Respectful workplace training

Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy: Guiding Principles

To guide our workplace mental health strategy, we have adopted the following principles:
• The strategy and programs are based on evidence-based best practices
• Employee mental health and wellbeing is a key consideration in decision making
• Everyone in the workplace has a role to play in creating and maintaining a workplace that promotes mental health and wellbeing
• Each employee has responsibility for their own health and behaviour
• Creating a workplace that supports mental health and wellbeing is only possible if it is aligned with our Culture Pillars
• Sensitive employee information will remain confidential

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

Goals/Priorities of the Strategy

1. Raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing and reduce stigma associated with mental illness
2. Align strategy with our People Plan
3. Provide people leaders with the skills, knowledge, tools and supports they need to create a workplace that supports positive mental health and wellbeing
4. Provide employees with the skills, knowledge, tools and supports they need to improve personal resilience and achieve optimal mental health and wellbeing
5. Create a sustainability plan

This strategy will be used to systematically assess and enhance mental health programs, policies and initiatives in the City's workplace to ensure a healthy workplace that supports and protects our employees' psychological health and safety in a manner that also furthers the goals of the City.

As part of our communication strategy, a Strategy and Guide has been developed on "*Creating Workplaces that Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing.*" (See Appendix A to Report HUR16006)

Alternatives for Consideration –Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for recommendation(s) only)

Financial:
The Corporate Wellness budget is presently utilized for corporate mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Individual departments do provide budget support for their own mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

Staffing:
Administered by internal staff.

Legal:
There are particular legal responsibilities arising from employee mental health issues that are related to a condition that could be considered a mental illness or "disability" under the *Ontario Human Rights Code.* Mental illness is clearly defined under the Code as a prohibited ground of discrimination and as such, the City has a duty to accommodate an employee to the point of undue hardship. Failure to appropriately accommodate such employees is considered a form of discrimination under the Code.

In order to effectively manage the stigmatization associated with mental health, there are a number of legal requirements that shed the onus on both the employer and the employee. Specifically, an employee has the "duty to inform" his/her employer of a disabling condition, including mental illness. In these cases, an employee has a duty to provide his/her employer with certain basic information regarding the nature of a

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

disability and how it does or could impact the workplace and the employee's ability to perform his/her work. Conversely, the employer has the "duty to inquire" about an employee's potential disability. Once an employer, acting reasonably, becomes aware that a possible link may exist between inappropriate behaviour or job performance and a disability or apparent disability, an employer has a duty to investigate whether or not the employment issues are related to a disability.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

Workplace Mental Health: The Canadian Context

There is growing recognition that the state of mental wellbeing for the entire community brings social and economic benefits to all. Since most people of working age spend a great part of their time at work, the workplace has an important role in mental health promotion and prevention of mental illness.

2012/13 saw the release of a number of important documents including the *Psychological Health and Safety Standard* and resources by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and its partners. These documents guide a pan-Canadian strategy to address mental health. It recognizes that improving mental health is more than treatment – the strategy must include promotion and prevention. Importantly, the approach of the Commission recognizes the critical contribution a workplace can make to the promotion, prevention and mitigation of mental health illness and issues.

The *Psychological Health and Safety Standard* (January 2013) provides employers with a framework to create psychologically safe workplaces. Although adherence to the Standard is voluntary, courts and adjudicators are using the Standard in their determinations of the standard of care that employers must meet to provide a psychologically safe workplace and prevent mental injury.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada released the *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Emplo*yers in 2012. The guide is based on the idea that psychological health and safety can be protected the same way workplaces protect physical health and safety. The guide includes a framework for workplaces to follow in developing their own strategies.

City Programs and Supports Already in Place

The Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy builds on important resources, supports, programs and initiatives already in place. The City of Hamilton has already demonstrated its commitment to its employees through:
- Establishment of corporate-wide Healthy Workplace Advisory Committee
- Mental health training for HR staff, city management and union leadership
- Our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

- EFAP information sessions on relationships, stress, time management, work/life balance and personalized platform website
- LifeSpeak On Demand, on-line videos
- Promotion of manager-focused workplace mental health micro-website
- Mental Health@Work Certificate Training for Leaders
- Flexible work arrangements including telecommuting
- Workplace mental health focus for annual joint health and safety recognition and learning event
- Respectful workplace training
- Bullying and harassment prevention policies
- Compassion fatigue training (train-the-trainer) for employees whose daily work involves helping others in dealing with difficult life circumstances
- Critical Incident Peer Support team to serve our employees during times of intense trauma or critical incidents
- Ongoing research into workplace mental health through conferences, seminars, articles and reports
- Membership in Excellence Canada for access to their healthy workplace expertise, training and resources
- Chronic pain support program
- Resiliency workshops
- Departmental wellness initiatives

How the Workplace Impacts Mental Health and Wellbeing

Workplace issues that affect mental health include:
- Stigma and discrimination
- Demand/control and effort/reward relationships
- Presenteeism
- Job burnout
- Harassment, violence, bullying and mobbing
- Substance use, misuse and abuse at work

Areas where the City can make a difference:
- Workloads
- Use of work extension technology (cell phones, e-mail, laptops)
- Managing change
- The immediate manager
- The organizational culture
- Perceived flexibility   *Dr. Linda Duxbury*

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

Top leaders of successful organizations have noted that advancing workplace mental health will result in positive outcomes related to:

- Risk management
- Cost effectiveness
- Social responsibility
- Recruitment and retention
- Organizational excellence   *Mental Health Commission of Canada*

City of Hamilton employee population observations:

- 43% our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) counselling services were provided for personal emotional issues including anxiety, stress, and depression in 2015.
- 2015 drug utilization (employees and dependents)
  - Depression treatment: $478,000 (6% of all prescription cost; #3 in terms of costs ranking (behind High Blood Pressure and Diabetes)
  - Mental issues: $123,000 (#21 in cost ranking)
- Mental and nervous disorders are the leading diagnosis of all long-term disability claims, surpassing musculoskeletal disorders and cancer for our employees

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Development and endorsement of a new Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

- Senior Management team
- Healthy Workplace Advisory Committee (Internal)
- Public Health Services
- Homewood Health

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION
(Include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data if applicable)

Work and work environments can positively or negatively impact employee mental health.

Mental health is about fostering the development of positive mental health by supporting individual resilience, creating supportive environments and addressing the influence of the broader determinants of mental health within the workplace.

Mental health and mental illness are separate but correlated states - one representing the presence or absence of mental health; the other, the presence or absence of mental illness.

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

The absence of mental illness does not imply the presence of mental health, or vice versa. A complete mental health model, endorsed by Hamilton Public Health Services, combines mental health with the presence or absence of mental illness.

There is growing recognition that improving the state of mental wellbeing for the whole population brings social and economic benefits to society. Since most people of working age spend a great part of their time at work, the role of the workplace in promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness is vital.

At work, mental health issues can significantly decrease a worker's productivity, and increase absenteeism. As a result, such impacts must be addressed with a view to lowering such factors that may contribute to these mental health issues.

Mental illness often is particularly challenging to recognize and accommodate in the workplace given that it can be either or both hidden and episodic. Stigmatization associated with mental illness may prevent employees from seeking medical treatment and, in the workplace, the fear of being ostracized may deter employees from seeking accommodation.

Creating a Workplace that Promotes Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health is fundamental to overall health. Good mental health allows an individual to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and make a contribution to the workplace and community.

"*Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community.*" *WHO*

A workplace that supports mental health and wellbeing is respectful and supportive of its employees.

Workplace mental health promotion, prevention and anti-stigma initiatives, training for management, and employee assistance programs all have a role to play in maintaining mental health and wellbeing. The City must encourage work-life balance and make sure employees are engaged in their work. Implementing policies and practices to deal with bullying and harassment related issues will also help to reduce the risks for mental health problems.

Good mental health makes us more resilient to everyday stresses and hardships and can help to reduce the risk of developing mental health problems and illnesses. When an employee develops a mental health problem or illness, they can still achieve good mental health and recovery with the right supports. The goal is to promote mental health and prevent mental illness.

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

Positive mental health improves the quality of lives and is integral to overall health and wellbeing. There is growing recognition that improving the state of mental wellbeing for the whole population brings social and economic benefits to society. Since most people of working age spend a great part of their time at work, the role of the workplace in promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness is vital.

Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing: A Framework for Change

To assist in our efforts to create a workplace that promotes mental health and wellbeing, we are adopting the framework from the *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers (2012).* This guide, created by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, identifies 24 actions with a "P6 Framework" an employer can take to enhance and protect employee psychological health and safety. The actions are evidence-based, practical and flexible.

P6 Framework

Policy
Commitment by organizational leadership to enhance psychological health and safety through workplace interventions • Obtain endorsement from our senior management team. • Establish an advisory committee to guide strategy development, implementation and evaluation • Develop and communicate the policy to all employees
Planning
Determination of key psychological health indicators across the organization, selection of actions, and specification of objectives. • Gather the facts by looking at all sources of employee data • Survey our employees to get their feedback and ideas • Measure readiness to change for all workplace parties
Promotion
Actions taken to promote the general psychological health of the workforce. • Build employee resilience through workshops and self-help resources • Create respectful workplaces • Enhance mental health knowledge

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

Prevention

Actions taken to prevent the occurrence of significant psychological problems or mental disorders – may occur at the primary, secondary or tertiary level.
- Use a mental health and wellbeing lens for job design and employee selection
- Provide stress management training to all employees
- Support work-home balance through policies and procedures
- Provide manager training on workplace mental health
- Provide early intervention through employee and family assistance program
- Support staying at work strategies to keep employees with mental health issues actively at work
- Ensure access to psychological treatment when appropriate
- Provide coordinated disability management to support employees off work and in their return to work

Process

Evaluation of implementation and results of actions taken to enhance psychological health and safety.
- Plan an evaluation of the effectiveness of our interventions
- Measure the implementation process to ensure programs are reaching employees
- Measure short - and longer - term outcomes

Persistence

Sustainment of effective actions in a process of continuous improvement.
- Support champions and communities of practice
- Create a culture of psychological safety
- Conduct quality improvement cycles

2016 Action Items

- Consolidate and analyze 2014-15 employee data
- Establish an advisory committee
- Establish a communication strategy to reach all employees
- Promote our EFAP and mental health supports
- Educate people leaders
- Provide targeted workshops for our employees
- Address first-responders PTSD prevention and response
- Provide educational resources for all employees
- Monitor the outcomes
- Survey employees

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

Future Actions (2017-2018)

In subsequent years, we will add focus on Process and Persistence while continuing to provide prevention activities already in place.

1. Evaluation
2. Implement continuous improvement
3. Support for champions
4. Benchmark with other organizations
5. Celebrate successes

Staff will provide regular status update Reports to Council with respect to progress on initiatives as well as seeking on-going support, as required.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

(Include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and Pros and Cons for each alternative)

Not applicable

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and wellbeing by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

1.5   Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and wellbeing of residents.
1.6   Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.1   Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.
2.2   Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork

2.3   Enhance customer service satisfaction.

Strategic Priority #3

Leadership & Governance

WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.

Strategic Objective

3.2   Build organizational capacity to ensure the City has a skilled workforce that is capable and enabled to deliver its business objectives.

3.3   Improve employee engagement.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report HUR16006 - Creating Workplaces that Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing: Strategy and Guide for the City of Hamilton 2016-2018.

OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork