

Supplementary Budget – Briefing Note

2022 Budget

Mental Health Strategy

Briefing Note required for:

- items +/- \$50,000 or more
- changes in FTE
- Council Priority requests

Dept	Division	Item	Base Supp	Amount	FTE Impact
CS	HROD	Mental Health Strategy	Base	\$50,000	
CS	HROD	Funding from reduction in base transfer to Corporate Sick Leave Provision Reserve	Base	(\$50,000)	
		Total		<u>\$0.00</u>	

Background:

While Mental Health and Psychological Health and Safety have been on the radar for Human Resource professionals for many years, the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees' mental wellbeing has punctuated the need to elevate this topic in Ontario's single tier municipalities.

The predominant psychological impacts associated with self-isolations and quarantines and its effects on people's interactions, exercise, routines, ability to generate income, etc. have increased the levels of loneliness, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use, and suicidal behavior, leading to higher than normal mental health leaves and earlier than planned retirements.

Municipalities can play an important role to demonstrate leadership to the community in supporting mental health in the workplace. With concrete municipal workplace mental health strategies in place to support employees and their families, the broader community can learn and benefit from the supports, resources and reduction in stigma.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centres, indicates that COVID-19 has both magnified and contributed to Canada's mental health crisis, making workplace mental health the most important issue facing organizations today. And while governments at all levels have recognized the negative impact that COVID-19 can have on mental health and are ensuring that resources, supports and care are available, they argue that more is needed. CAMH anticipates the mental health impacts of COVID-19 can be expected to last for some time and will place added burden on Canada's already overwhelmed mental health system. They call for governments and decision-makers to continue to step up and make mental health a priority by investing in a long-term, system wide response and to recognize that "mental health is health". Their five recommendations for business leaders and other employers to consider as they strive to support mental health in their workplaces include:

1. Create an organization-wide mental health strategy focused on leadership, inclusion, well-being, job stress and work life balance
2. Institute mandatory mental health leadership training
3. Develop tailored mental health supports for different mental illnesses, diverse identities and different workplaces
4. Prioritize the return to work process
5. Measure outcomes and build accountabilities

Background:

Mentally healthy workplaces benefit employees, employers and the economy and CAMH believes implementing these recommendations should be a priority for business leaders and other employers so together, we can create workplaces where mental health is health.

Municipalities are encouraged to carefully evaluate their current financial and people resources dedicated to mental health and ensure they plan long-term to meet and sustain the increased needs. Only with adequate prioritization and resourcing can municipalities fully implement the recommended programs and supports to be a leader in mental health in the workplace.

Comment:

It is recommended that base budget funding in the amount of \$50,000 to develop a Mental Health Strategy come from the Corporate Sick Leave Provision Reserve currently has a base budget of \$127,342. Approving this initiative would reduce the base budget down to \$77,342.