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Empowering Ohio Businesses to Address Mental Health in the Workplace

COLUMBUS, OHIO – May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This is a crucial time for promoting understanding, empathy and action around mental health issues and having conversations to break stigmas. As Ohio continues to grow and more and more businesses come to the state, it is critical that employers understand their behavioral health care system and feel empowered to support their staff when they need it most.

The Ohio Chamber released its [*Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future*](#), a comprehensive report that focuses on Ohio's key areas for economic growth and improvement, in late 2022. The Chamber will use the *Blueprint's* recommendations to formulate its policy priorities for years to come.

The *Blueprint* identified six strategic areas of opportunity to increase Ohio's competitiveness, including Sense of Place. Sense of Place refers to Ohio's many features that make the state a great place to live, work and visit. The *Blueprint* states that "Economic development policies aimed at increasing Ohio's population should focus as much on investing in amenities and quality of life in Ohio as they do on business attraction."

One of the *Blueprint's* recommendations to improve Sense of Place is to "Improve Health Outcomes and Address Drug Crisis." Along that vein, the report emphasizes the importance of increasing awareness and access to addiction treatment, harm reduction and mental health services. In order to fulfill that recommendation, the Ohio Chamber has focused its support on organizations and campaigns that provide education on and bring awareness to mental health issues, like the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF).

"The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation is doing very important work in the mental health space," said Ohio Chamber President & CEO Steve Stivers. "They provide valuable resources to the general

public as well as the business community. Employers serve a crucial role in ensuring their employees have access to mental health services, and the OSPF equips them to fulfill that role.”

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation has launched their [Mental Health in the Workplace Employer Resource Guide](#) to help employers address when an employee is experiencing a mental health crisis in the workplace as well as policies and procedures to help.

Today’s workforce is experiencing stress in a number of ways, which can lead to anxiety, depression and general feelings of instability. This can cause a ripple effect throughout the workplace, making it vitally important that management knows what to do in these situations.

The guide provides helpful tips and talking points, statewide and federal resources, and postvention strategies, which can be used to respond when a suicide occurs in the workplace. There are also marketing materials, including posters, rack cards, flyers and more, provided with the toolkit to promote the use of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Workplaces can reach out to the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation for additional support and resources by contacting support@ohiospf.org.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, call or text the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.

The Ohio Chamber is the state’s leading business advocate and represents thousands of companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

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