

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS SHARON DURKAN, BREADON, COLETTA, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL, AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO CITY OF BOSTON EMPLOYEES AND NEW RESOURCES IMPLEMENTED AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- WHEREAS,** The loss of life and mandated social distancing within the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic increased global rates of depression and anxiety by 25% according to the World Health Organization; and
- WHEREAS,** The impacts of this collective experience and ensuing mental health crisis directly impact City of Boston employees; and
- WHEREAS,** Mind Share Partner, a national nonprofit focused on changing the culture of workplace mental health, released a Mental Health at Work Report in 2021, which found 76% of U.S. workers reported at least one symptom of a mental health condition, up 17 percentage points in two years; and
- WHEREAS,** Boston Public Health Commission's Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Center, established in 2022, provides programming that addresses holistic wellness, develops communication strategies to reduce stigma around reaching out for help, and promotes culturally sensitive, evidence-based mental health, behavioral health, and wellness resources; and
- WHEREAS,** The City of Boston's Human Resource Department's Employee Assistance Program addresses the well-being of its workforce by promoting, establishing, and increasing quality of life, good health, and personal experiences for City employees; and
- WHEREAS,** Boston's Covid-19 Recovery Committee of the Boston City Council held a hearing on City worker mental health resources on October 24, 2024 where Chief People Officer, Alex Lawrence, Associate Director of the Employee Assistance Program, Ulric Johnson, Emergency Medical Services Chief James Hooley, Director of Health Benefits and Insurance, Emma Bletzer, and Chief Behavioral Health Officer, Dr. Kevin Simon and his colleague Samara Grossman outlined the importance of mental health and wellbeing resources for City employees and the barriers to access those resources; and
- WHEREAS,** It is a practical and moral imperative for the Boston City Council to continue to

investigate, address, and identify mental health challenges and detriments to recovery in the workplaces and recommend innovative improvements to better serve City employees; NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council convene a hearing to deliberate on the mental health resources available to City of Boston workers and the quality of care improvements implemented in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the representatives of the Boston Public Health Commission, the City of Boston's Human Resources Department, Boston's Employee Assistance Program, the Boston First Responders Peer Support Network, SEIU 888, and the public be invited to testify.