

**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**  
**Pursuant to P.A. 166 of 2020**  
**Section 312(3)**  
**Psychological Issues Among Employees**  
**Employee Wellness**

Sec. 312 (1) Funds appropriated in part 1 for employee wellness programming shall be used for post-traumatic stress outreach, treating mental health issues, and providing mental health programming for all department staff, including former employees.

(2) From the funds appropriated in part 1 for employee wellness programming, \$50,000.00 shall be used to conduct a comprehensive follow-up study to the initial study that was conducted in fiscal year 2019, of the prevalence of post-traumatic stress and other psychological issues among department staff that are exacerbated by the corrections environment and exposure to highly stressful situations.

(3) By September 30, the department shall submit a report on the results of the study and on programs the department has established, the level of employee involvement, and expenditures made by the department for employee wellness programming. The department shall submit the report to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on corrections, the senate and house committees on oversight, the senate and house fiscal agencies, the legislative corrections ombudsman, and the state budget office.

The MDOC Wellness Program has modified focus areas, initiatives and service delivery means to incorporate the significant and complex stressors since the pandemic began. The MDOC Wellness Unit has continued to provide professional and confidential wellness services to employees, retirees, and eligible family members. Virtual means has been incorporated to create accessible and safe contact services for the MDOC community. Onsite and in-person services adhere to State of Michigan safe-distancing guidelines and with the approval of departmental appointing authorities, and wardens/ supervisors.

The goals of the MDOC Wellness Program continue to be to facilitate accessible, relevant, and diversified resource wellness services for the MDOC employees, family members and retirees.

The Wellness Unit is comprised of six FTE employees. Four employees are licensed mental health clinicians, with one clinician serving as the Program Manager. Three clinicians serve as Wellness Coordinators, with the third Coordinator onboarded during FY21. These Coordinators are regionally located in the Northern (Upper Peninsula), Central and Southern areas of Michigan. They oversee Wellness Services in their respective areas, including oversight and clinical consultation for the Peer Support Persons. All clinicians serve as clinical support for employees. A Departmental Specialist serves as the designated Chaplain Coordinator and is developing the Employee Chaplain Program (ECP) to provide faith-based volunteer services for departmental members. A Departmental Technician was onboarded with the Wellness Unit during FY 2021. This staff member is responsible for developing and implementing evaluation, tracking and assessment methods for MDOC Wellness Programs and services.

The following are specific departmental-wide formal wellness initiatives and status for the FY21.

## **Peer Support Program**

An original initiative for the MDOC Wellness Program was to develop “boots on the ground” support for employees at worksites. Peer Support Persons (PSPs) provide confidential support and assistance to employees in times of stress and crisis. Services provided by the PSPs may include emotional support, encouragement, help with communication and coping skills, and referrals for professional services. The Peer Support Program has been intentionally developed to respect and embrace the diversity of roles, experiences, and backgrounds within MDOC. The PSPs will mindfully be considered to represent and respect these many diversities.

Peer Support initial training consists of 16 hours of core skill development. This training is mandatory to be considered as an active PSP. Although this is a voluntary role, the MDOC recognizes the core training as worktime. PSPs were compensated as such for their participation in this training. Core peer support training was completed by 36 selected PSPs during FY 2021. With 13 selected PSPs waiting for training during October 2021, it is projected that an additional 64 PSPs will be trained during fiscal year 2022. The goal is to continue to develop the Peer Support Program to a full complement of 100 PSPs by FY 2022.

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## **Chaplain Program**

The purpose of the Employee Chaplain Program (ECP) is to offer assistance and appropriate spiritual support to all eligible MDOC employees, retirees, and family members when personal or professional stressors negatively impact their lives. The accumulation of stress negatively effects the health and well-being of our employees to varying degrees, but the impact of the distressed employee may be felt by all. The MDOC Employee Chaplain volunteers will be specially trained to help address these stressors in a natural and confidential manner.

Prior to launching the ECP, a Religious Survey was sent to the field beginning October 25, 2021. This survey will help to assure a diverse Chaplain Corp by providing insight into the religious traditions represented within the MDOC. In addition to nominations from the field, this insight will allow for strategic recruiting of volunteer clergy and religious leaders to serve as Chaplains for our employees.

For FY 2022, it is projected that 30 Employee Chaplain volunteers will be vetted, trained, and introduced to the MDOC field.

## **Wellness Unit Services and employee participation**

The following information is related to Services provided from September 1, 2020 - August 31, 2021.

*(Direct Services are individual contacts for clinical, chaplain or consultation services. Events are group services which are facilitated by Wellness Unit staff members. Wellness Service Events are requested group presentations, trainings, critical incident Wellness Services and forums.)*

Total direct Wellness Service contacts:	4192
Number of Wellness Service Group Events:	259
Total Wellness Service Group Participants:	5172

The primary reasons for individual contacts were job-related (26%) and critical incident-related (23%). Critical incidents contact could be due either personal or professional occurrences. Individual contacts with Wellness Unit staff increased by 70% since FY20.

Wellness Service Group Events were provided either using safe distancing onsite or by virtual means. During the FY21, the Wellness Unit completed 259 Events with 5172 employee participants. A significant number of the Events (39%) were requested as a response to a work-related critical incident.

### **MDOC Wellness Mobile App**

During FY21, the MDOC procured the services of Lexipol/ Cordico to develop a customized mobile wellness app for the MDOC members. This corrections-specific app will be available for MDOC employees, family members and retirees to download on their personal devices. Usage of the app will be confidential, for personal use and independent from MDOC software. The app will include such features as a one-touch Crisis Line connectivity, specific wellness information related to mental health, exercise and nutrition, Therapist-finder, wellness tools for topics such as family support, grief, and loss. MDOC resources including the Wellness Unit, Peer Support Persons and the Employee Chaplain contact information will be accessible. Also included will be confidential self-assessment tools for areas such as alcohol abuse, depression, and sleep.

The initial roll out for the Wellness App was in November 2021. Annual subscription costs for development, customer service and maintenance are \$154,780.00 annually.

### **Wellness Advisory Board**

The Wellness Program Advisory Board is an active working group of the MDOC stakeholders who bring their unique knowledge, insight, and perspective to assist in guidance and recommendations for the Wellness Program. Representation for the Wellness Advisory Board will consist of a representative from each of the following stakeholders:

- MDOC Wellness Program Manager
- MDOC Human Resources
- MDOC-affiliated unions
- MDOC employees (4) selected annually
- Employee Service Program (ESP)
- MDOC DEI Officer

Representatives meet collectively monthly and in subgroups throughout each month. Focused areas include: 1) policy development and incorporating employee wellness, 2) Strategic communications for building morale, promoting engagement, and delivering recognition, 3) worksite wellness and environmental enhancements, and 4) post-traumatic recovery and wellness promotion.

### **Specific Population Wellness Initiatives**

## **Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans and Families (SMVF)**

In efforts to reduce suicide among Correction Officers, Agents, and Staff with military background, the MDOC connected with the Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency (MVAA) and the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF). The focused efforts in reduction of suicide among SMVF include increased access to support, enhancing SMVF peer-to-peer practices, and implementing best practices such as: Asking the Question – "Have you or a member of your household ever served in the military?"; making connections for SMVF through their places of employment, and providing lethal means safety. MDOC has participated in this effort.

The MDOC created an EPIC team to address wellness among SMVF working within MDOC. Recommendations include creating a Veteran program for women who have served in the military, re-establish the annual Veteran's Award, establish a Veteran Spotlight in the Corrections Connection, and work collaboratively with the MDOC Wellness Unit to recognize SMVF and offer supportive services throughout the year through Wellness Clinical Coordinators and the Peer Support Program, and to maintain connections with service members when deployed, such as through Caring Connection Cards.

### **New Women in Corrections**

Volunteer forums for new CFA recruits were offered during three Academy schools in FY21. The forum included virtual and in-person attendance. The forum was a guided discussion amongst current staff and the new recruits to offer opportunity address specialized considerations women in Corrections may face. A Wellness Unit clinician facilitated each Forum offering experienced clinical emotional support and guidance. Conversations provide opportunity from recruits to ask questions regarding the challenges of being a woman in a CFA profession. Staff provide authentic and genuine feedback through their own personal experiences offering suggestions and support, even following their Academy graduation. These forums provide an expectation of a safe and confidential environment for attendees.

With the positive response and participation, it has been requested for such Forums to continue being offered at CFA Academies, as well as FOA and non-custody new employee schools.

The Wellness Program will continue to explore and provide opportunities to provide Wellness Services to targeted populations within the MDOC. With the addition of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer to the MDOC,

### **FY21 Building Resiliency Training**

The goal of this four-hour training is to provide an interactive opportunity for employees to explore and identify their individual stressors, learn the concepts of resiliency, and develop skill-based strategies to building resiliency in their personal and professional lives. The original training was modified to respect the impacts of the pandemic and include specific information related to self-care during this time. All MDOC employees participated in this training and will be encouraged to share information with their families.

### **MDOC Employee Wellness follow-up research**

To maintain the integrity of follow-up studies for this specific research, it is necessary to incorporate the significance of the pandemic effects in measuring post traumatic symptoms and other psychological disorders. Therefore, it was determined a comparable follow-up study to the 2019 Desert Waters study would not demonstrate valid and reliable measures at this time. Psychological measurements would likely be significantly skewed due to the plausible negative impacts of the pandemic and residual effects.

#### **FY21 Employee Wellness expenditure categories**

- 1) **Wellness Unit funding for six staff, office expenses and travel**
  
- 2) **Employee Wellness Promotional, Wellness Campaign and Engagement items**  
to include healthy snacks, challenge coins, lapel pins and other items given to encourage or support employees with wellness.
  
- 3) **Lexipol/ Cordico Wellness App**
  
- 4) **Employee Volunteer Program training and supports**  
to include Peer Support and Employee Chaplain Program (FY22)
  
- 5) **Worksite employee environmental supports**  
to include items such as stress mats, chair replacement, water fountain upgrades and standing desk converters
  
- 6) **Employee worksite area upgrades and events**  
to include breakrooms, bathrooms, employee wellness rooms or other structural revision for healthier work environments, new office furniture, chairs, ergonomic enhancements (stand/sit desks, anti-fatigue mats), food trucks, and appreciation events