

October 25, 2024

Regional Memo Order No. 090
Series of 2024

SUBJECT: MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM (MHP) OF DTI 12

I. Rationale

In the interest of the service and in line with the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) mandate to promote economic development, DTI Region 12 is committed to integrating and advocating for mental health initiatives across all human resource and organizational development policies and programs. This effort ensures that every employee is both aware of and sensitive to mental health issues and initiatives.

DTI 12 is dedicated to fostering the well-being of all personnel by prioritizing the value, protection and promotion of mental health. We are committed to providing treatment and preventive care for mental health conditions while ensuring that employees have access to timely, affordable, high-quality, and culturally appropriate healthcare services. We guarantee that these health services will be provided without coercion and will remain accountable to the employees who use them. Moreover, we uphold the rights of employees affected by mental health conditions, allowing them to work and fully participate in the workplace without fear of stigma or discrimination.

II. Objectives

1. Strengthen leadership and governance for mental health by formulating, developing, and implementing comprehensive agency policies, strategies, and programs that align with DTI's mission.
2. Establish a robust, integrated mental health program that effectively addresses the psychiatric, neurologic, and psychosocial needs of all employees.
3. Safeguard the rights of employees with psychiatric, neurological, and psychosocial health needs, ensuring they have equal opportunities and access to support.
4. Incorporate mental health care into basic health services for employees and align it with human resource systems and processes.
5. Implement strategies that foster mental health awareness and support within the workplace, enhancing employee well-being and productivity.

REGION 12 (SOCCSKSARGEN)

III. Coverage

This Mental Health Program shall cover all employees of the agency, regardless of employment status, including regular, permanent, casual and contractual employees.

IV. Guiding Principles

1. Non-discriminatory

An employee at risk shall not be discriminated in any form, regardless of status, age, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, creed or religion.

Any employee at risk or identified to have a mental health condition shall not be discriminated in terms of recruitment, promotion and termination. They shall not be discriminated nor prevented from receiving benefits as government employees because of their condition.

They shall continue to perform their duties and responsibilities provided they are issued a certification certifying that their condition does not impede their productivity and still fit to work and continued work will not aggravate mental health condition.

2. Reasonable Working Arrangements

Employees identified to have mental condition and have undergone treatment and recovered as certified by an attending physician shall not be prevented from returning to work provided an accredited physician certifies that he/she is fit to work.

The Agency Head shall make work arrangements adaptable and flexible to accommodate employees at risk or identified with mental health conditions.

3. Confidentiality

All information and medical records, including those submitted during the recruitment process shall be protected and treated with confidentiality, as provided under applicable laws and rules, particularly the Data Privacy Act.

4. Rights-based

The right to health as enshrined under the Universal Health Rights is promoted, protected, fulfilled through the mental health program.

Employees at risk or identified with mental condition shall not be deprived of the opportunity to work and to participate in policymaking and program implementation relating to mental health.

Employees at risk or identified with mental health shall not be prevented from exercising their inherent civil, political, economic, social, religious and cultural rights.

Employees at risk or identified with mental health shall have access to affordable evidence-based treatment and medical services and participate in mental health advocacy, policy planning, legislation, service provision, monitoring research and evaluation.

5. Sustainability

Mental health initiatives shall be integrated into the Health and Wellness program to ensure their sustainability.

V. Strategies

1. Prevention, promotion and information and education campaign on mental health well-being
 - a) Conduct of Mental Health Wellness activities
 - i. Regular stress management activities
 - ii. Team-building activities
 - iii. Organized Peer Counseling Circle
 - iv. Physical fitness activities
 - v. support group for employees with special needs (working mothers/lactating mothers, single parent)
 - vi. Interest group sharing (hobbyists, riders, theatre artists, etc.)
 - b) Conduct of continuing mental health awareness/education activities
 - i. Production of IEC materials on mental health (e.g. distributing leaflets challenging the misconceptions associated with mental illness)
 - ii. Conduct of regular seminars, symposiums, or fora on mental health for all employees; and
 - iii. Conduct of stress debriefing to identified/selected employees who suffered tragic, traumatic and stressful life experience/event
2. Treatment and Recovery
 - a) Provision of support to employees with mental health issues at work by providing intervention, treatment and referral.
 - b) Conduct of debriefing interventions in case of life-threatening situations or traumatic experience which may or may not be work related (e.g. after experiencing natural/man-made calamities).
 - c) Reintegration into the workplace of employees who have completed mental health treatment.
 - d) Provision of support to retiring employees for easier transition.
3. Integration of mental health in human resource development and management policies and programs

a) Ensure that mental health assessment of an employee is undertaken during recruitment and, if applicable, during promotion.

In the case of promotion, the agency may identify certain positions that may require mandatory mental health assessment (i.e., Executive/Managerial, drivers, frontline positions).

b) Integrate mental health awareness session in the new employees' orientation.

Include mental health assessment in the Annual Physical Examination (APE).

d) Provide mechanism to ensure the psychological wellness of its human resource personnel and agency mental health service providers.

4. Establishment of institutional networks and referral system which can provide support mechanism for employees who are with mental conditions or at risk for mental health condition:

a) Institutional Networks

- Inventory of Health Institutions that provide treatment and recovery program for people with mental health issues/concerns, with list of services offered and their contact numbers
- Mobilization of organized support groups on mental health
- Provision of DOH MH Hotline and other support mechanisms for employees at risks and with mental health conditions

b) Referral system

- A protocol or referral system for employees with mental health conditions should be established

5. Capacity-building for MHP administrators in the agency

a) Provide basic education and trainings on mental health for MHP administrators;

b) Provide information and training on how to handle employees at risk or those with mental health conditions.

6. Review of working conditions

a) Assessment of workplace conditions/environment

b) Assessment of workload assignment vis-a-vis accomplishment

c) Review of job description

VI. Implementation Mechanism of the MHP

1. The Mental Health Service Provider shall assess the employee at risk or identified with mental health condition, to identify the stage of mental well-being of such employee.

2. Appropriate action based on the initial assessment shall be undertaken by the Human Resource Management Unit, which may be, but not limited to:
 - a. Notification of family members on initial assessment on the condition of the employee at risk and solicit their support to the process; and
 - b. Referral to accredited and licensed mental health professionals and mental health institutions for further assessment.
3. Should there be a need for employees at risk or identified with mental health conditions to undergo medical check-up and assessment, the agency shall refer to relevant medical institutions to provide for such needs and treatment, as necessary.
4. Should there be a need for the employee at risk or identified with mental health condition to undergo treatment, the agency head shall allow the employee the necessary number of days leave chargeable against his/her earned leave as recommended by the attending physician.
5. Work arrangements shall be made to accommodate employees who will report to work after treatment.
6. Monitoring of performance and health conditions shall be done to ensure sustainable productivity and wellness of the employee who had undergone treatment from mental health condition.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Head of Government Agency

The Agency Head shall ensure the institutionalization of the implementation of the MHP, with the following responsibilities;

1. Ensure that all established mental health policies are administered and enforced in the workplace;
2. Ensure mental health program is integrated in the human resource development and management policies and processes;
3. Provide resources including funding to effectively implement the mental health program; and
4. Establish institutional network which can provide assistance in the implementation of the mental health program.

B. Human Resource Management Unit of the Administrative, Financial and Management Division (AFMD)

The MHP and its programs and activities shall be managed by the Human Resource Management Unit in coordination with the DTI 12 Safety and Health Committee, with the following responsibilities:

1. Ensure mental health program is integrated in the human resource development and management policies and programs;

2. Administer, manage and monitor implementation of the Mental Health Program;
3. Provide continuous education and training and initiate workplace discussions on mental health and ensure that all human resources are aware of the mental health program.
4. Maintain contact with institutional networks (e.g., hospitals, agencies, trainers, health and other professionals, etc.) to support the implementation of MHP;
5. Keep up-to-date with recommended mental health information and education materials;
6. Assist in incident investigations, analysis and preparation of mental health related reports and summaries, keeping record of the same;
7. Establish Mental Health Profile of employees and ensure that records of employees with mental health conditions and those at risk must at all times be managed, kept safe and treated with confidentiality conforming with the provision of the Data Privacy Act and the Mental Health Act; and
8. Submit a copy of the agency MHP within six (6) months after the effectivity of these Guidelines to the CSC through the CSC-HRRO for monitoring, reference, and records purposes.

Submit quarterly monitoring report to the Head of Agency on the implementation of the MHP and such report shall be included in the annual accomplishment report of the agency.

VIII. Employee Organization/Association

The officers and members of the employee organization shall be tapped to:

1. Collaborate with the head of the agency and the human resource management office or unit/office in charge in the development administration, implementation, and monitoring of the MHP; and,
2. Provide support and assistance in developing strategies, administration, information dissemination, implementation and monitoring of the programs and activities on mental health initiate.

IX. Communication Plan

The agency shall adopt and implement a communication plan to promote the mental health program using available media. Information and education materials

shall be made available, and activities may be conducted to facilitate the dissemination of relevant information on mental health.

X. Monitoring and Evaluation

A quarterly monitoring report shall be submitted by the Human Resource Management Unit to the Head of Agency through the Safety and Health Committee on the implementation of the MHP and such report shall be included in the annual accomplishment report of the agency.

XI. Funding Source

The agency shall allocate and incorporate funds and resources in its annual work and financial plan and budget.

This Order takes effect immediately and shall remain in force until revoked and/or further amended by a competent authority.

All Regional Memo Orders inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked.

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Regional Director 

Cc: All DTI XII Staff