

Press Release
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
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WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY UNDERWAY

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently has officially classified workplace burnout as an occupational phenomenon. This pronouncement could not have come in a more perfect time than now that the DOLE is in the process of consultation in the drafting of a Department Order on Mental Health. Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

Mental Health is a catch-all term to describe any and all issues that may affect the mind. It includes a variety of mental disorders, addiction, neurologic disorders and behavioral problems.

RA 11036 otherwise known as the Mental Health Act mandates the government to provide specific health sectors, units and health workforce that are primarily dedicated to attending to mental health sufferers.

The law is the first to acknowledge measures that directly shifts the focus of care, primarily to the community, emphasizing the importance of access to services and integration of mental health in both the national school curricula and countrywide workplace regulations. In her interview with CNN Philippines last May 29, 2019, Dr. Ma. Imelda S. Santos, Chief Labor and Employment Officer of the Bureau of Working Conditions narrated the components of the DOLE's proposed policy on Mental Health. She narrated that in the proposed Department Order, *"employers are directed to develop appropriate policies and programs on mental health in the workplace designed to: raise awareness on mental health issues, correct the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions identify and provide support for individuals at risk, and facilitate access of individuals with mental health conditions to treatment and psychosocial support. Mental Health Program includes capacity building, mental health promotion and access to services"*.

A mental health strategy enhances the experience of all employees by preventing psychological injury, promoting psychological wellbeing, and supporting employees who are experiencing a mental health problem or illness.

It is expected that the adoption of workplace mental health promotion programs by more employers can exert a strong influence on improving the holistic health and well-being of workers which could readily translate to productivity. The DOLE shall issue its Mental Health Policy not later than August 19 of this year.

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