

### MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK



### **TAKE ACTION**



### **WELCOME**

Mental health has long been a priority for the KC Chamber and its Healthy KC initiative. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, more of our members have come to us sharing that they want to prioritize mental health at their organization, but they don't always know where to start. Kansas City is home to a vibrant business community with companies of all sizes and across different sectors. When we decided to create this guide based on the needs identified in our 2020 Mental Health Assessment, we knew that there could be no "one-size-fits-all" approach because every organization is different and knows what is best for their employees. This guide is designed to be a resource to help you get started. We encourage you to make this your own and tailor your approach to your needs.

To get the most value out of this resource, we encourage you to attend the three-part workshop series that will accompany this guide. You will be able to collaborate with similar organizations and work to create an individualize workplace mental health plan for your organization.

We are committed to our focus on mental health and know that as the knowledge and best practices evolve, so will our recommendations. We will create programming and resources to help your organization navigate mental health at all levels. We are grateful to the Behavioral Health Action Team for lending their time and expertise to create this guide for Kansas City. Their volunteer leadership has been invaluable in creating this resource.

Lastly, we want to extend our gratitude to our Healthy KC sponsors, and especially Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City. Their partnership makes the work we do to support mental health possible.

Grace Dolan,
Manager, Civic and Community Initiatives
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce



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Healthy KC is an initiative of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce



## WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH DATA INSIGHTS

This guide is designed to help you start the conversation and create an environment of acceptance and understanding. By creating this safe space, you're letting employees know that all of us struggle sometimes and that it's not only OK but encouraged to seek support and treatment. Our hope is to help Kansas City become a leader in promoting health in the workplace. This guide is designed to help you and your organization take the next steps.

Mental illness is the single greatest cause of worker disability worldwide. That's because our mental health affects how we show up for work–and whether we show up at all:

- Employees who are depressed miss nearly 5 days of work every 3 months, and up to 25 days more per year than other workers.
- Depression also results in 11.5 days of reduced productivity every 3 months, including impaired performance for 1-2 hours of every 8-hour shift.
- 62% of missed workdays are attributed to burnout, depression, or anxiety.
- For every employee experiencing mental distress, employers incur \$15,000 per year in lost productivity, health care costs and turnover.
- 50% of full-time U.S. workers have left a previous job due, at least in part, to mental health reasons.
- Mental health crisis is at an all time high after the trauma and isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic - employers are struggling with retention, engagement, productivity, absenteeism, and presenteeism.
- 41% of youth, our future workforce, are experiencing anxiety and depression
- Missouri and Kansas show higher prevalence of mental illness and lower access to care in comparison to other states

The good news is, investing in workplace mental health not only improves the lives of your employees, it also makes smart business sense. Employers see a \$4 return for every dollar invested in employee mental health support and treatment.

The incentive for investing in workplace mental health goes beyond the costs you'll recover in productivity and retention. It's also what workers expect. Seventy-six percent of workers believe their company should do more to support their mental health. Efforts to champion workplace mental health can improve an employee's sense of purpose, promote engagement, and increase a company's bottom line.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Health Action Alliance

### HISTORY OF KANSAS CITY MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Mental Health has been a key component of the Healthy KC initiative since its inception. In 2016, the Resilient KC campaign was launched with the goal of raising awareness around trauma and the effects of adverse childhood experiences and their impact on the community. The campaign was organized as a partnership between the KC Chamber and Trauma KC, with support from Sesame Street in Communities.

In 2020, Healthy KC published the KC Workplace Mental Health Assessment. The assessment became a key tool in learning about and sharing what mental health resources businesses and organizations in the region are providing their employees. Key findings from the assessment included the need for more visible leader support of mental health, more training for managers and supervisors on supporting employees struggling with mental health concerns, and internal mental health action plans.

As the COVID-19 pandemic brought the importance of mental health to the forefront of the business community, Healthy KC provided resources for Kansas City. In 2020, Healthy KC hosted webinars on mental health and facilitated connections between organizations and mental health services and companies at an online mental health vendor expo.

In the transition back to in-person work and the growing popularity of hybrid work, Healthy KC began hosting in person events to better understand what the community was interested in learning about mental health. In the spring of 2022, Healthy KC hosted a roundtable on Languishing in the Workplace. Representatives from different Kansas City businesses and organizations came to share the trends they were noticing in their workplaces, share ideas and struggles and collaborate on solutions. The ideas shared in this event were built upon in the fall of 2022 at the event "Supporting Mental Well-being in the Workplace: Tips for Managers and Teammates." The response to these events proved that focus on mental health in the workplace wasn't just a trend at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Kansas City employers care about the mental health of their employees and are eager to be connected with the best resources.

As an initiative of the KC Chamber, Healthy KC recognizes the impact that the mental well-being of the workforce has on the community as a whole. Healthy KC is committed to continuing its focus on mental health and well-being in Kansas City through providing resources, events, and workshops. Utilizing community feedback, this guide is structured to meet people where they are – and to push them into a space of growth.

### HISTORY OF KANSAS CITY MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

The KC Workplace Mental Health Assessment identified areas needing improvement."

Using mental health-related data to strategically develop action plans

### **More Support**

for managers and supervisors on supporting employees struggling with mental health concerns.

More visible leader support.

Using mental health-related data to strategically develop action plans.

Additionally, Healthy KC publishes the Workplace Wellness Certification every other year. Aligned with the World Health Organization's Healthy Workplace's Framework, the Certification is designed to be both summative and formative. It gauges the state of well-being of Kansas City businesses and strives to give organizations ideas for new and innovative policies and practices to implement. The certification is both a great way to be recognized for your accomplishments in employee well-being, and to help your organization grow.



## TIMELINE OF MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES IN KANSAS CITY

2011- Needs Assessment showing a desire and necessity to address trauma and build resilience among diverse professionals in the KC area.

2012- First meeting of Trauma Matters KC (TMKC), a grassroots convening of trauma experts from both KS and MO

2012-2013: Kansas City Police Department partners with TMKC and develops a four-hour interactive training: Building Resilience-Surviving Secondary Trauma

2013- KC Trauma Sensitive Schools launches training more than 80 educators over two years

2014- Crittenton's <u>Head Start-Trauma Smart</u> - trauma-informed Head Start program is nationally recognized as best practice

2014- Citywide Resilience Day

2015: KC Chamber introduces Healthy KC to the community in partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City

2015: The Chamber becomes a fiscal sponsor for TMKC's national grant: Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities (MARC)

2015: Kansas City is one of 14 cities nationwide awarded MARC funding to build a trauma-informed and resilient community over the course of two years

2016: ResilientKC is launched in the Kansas City community. ACEs data is collected and an awareness campaign is run. Stories Matter Campaign

2016: Bouncing Back: Building a Resilient Community Dinner with 600+ guests in attendance

2017: Partnership with Sesame Street in Communities to support parents and caregivers in the healthy development of their children as part of the ResilientKC campaign



## TIMELINE OF MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES IN KANSAS CITY

2017: Resiliency Rally event held at Arrowhead Stadium for the KC community

2017: Alive & Thrive Wyandotte initiative focuses on trauma and ACE's to improve health outcomes for the county

2018: ResilientKC transitions to Alive and Well Communities

2019: Missouri Department releases the <u>Mental Health Trauma Initiative Overview Revised</u>, of which Kansas City was an early adopter

2019: "Start the Chat": The Mental Health Assessment launches

2020: "Continue the Chat": Mental Health Assessment findings presented

2020: Workplace Mental Health Resource Showcase

2020: Northland Strong launches as a trauma-informed group that provides training in prevention and intervention related to trauma-informed care

2021: Q4 Networking Forum: "Mental Health: The Bottom Line"

2022: Roundtable discussions: "Languishing in the Workplace"

2022: Panel discussion: "Supporting Mental Well-being in the Workplace: Tips for Managers and Teammates."

2023: Johnson County initiative to quantify trauma

2023: Healthy KC launches Mental Health Guide for Employers and LAB Workshop Series



## BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

People are the heart of every organization, and with people come a variety of health, well-being, and productivity challenges. Relationship problems (conflict with spouse/partner, arguments and worry about one's teenager); everyday stressors (poor work-life balance, feeling overwhelmed); and mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and substance misuse are common among the American workforce and have a significant – and sometimes devastating – impact on individual, family, and community well-being. They also take a toll on workplace effectiveness and employer healthcare costs. The need for a mental health plan in the workplace has been acknowledged by organizations across the country. There are many resources designed to deepen your understanding of successful strategies for businesses and organizations of all different types. At the end of this guide, we have provided a list of a variety of mental health toolkits to help you find the one that best fits your needs.

#### What can organizations do right now to improve workplace mental health? $^2$

Raise awareness about the importance of mental health and well-being- Reducing stigma starting from top-down leadership, employee communication that shares personal stories, training for managers that builds awareness and helps in supporting employees with mental health struggles.

- <u>Manage risks associated with work and culture</u>. Support work-life integration opportunities like flexible leave, childcare, family support, and grief support. Provide employee growth and training including health and well-being initiatives, diversity, equity and inclusion, peer support groups, employee recognition based on performance, and a healthy work environment. Examples include:
  - providing a dedicated quiet space where employees can engage in relaxation
  - providing alternate spaces that promote collaboration
  - offering a variety of resources and opportunities to encourage employees to flourish like, but not limited to; flexible work arrangements, such as flextime and telecommuting, assistance with child and elder care, personal financial issues, flexible leave options beyond those required by the Family and Medical Leave Act, continuing education courses, tuition reimbursement, career development or counseling services, opportunities for promotion and internal

career advancement, coaching, mentoring, recognition, and leadership development program.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

Assess mental health and well-being needs and measure the impact- Survey and assess employee satisfaction, absenteeism, presenteeism, productivity, disability trends, leave trends, and retention rates. Once the results have been collected, be certain to respond and implement changes that reflect the employees needs.

<u>Provide access to high quality mental health care</u>- Offer full benefits packaging, Employee Assistance Programs, and allow time-off to attend self-care sessions and therapy.

<u>Well-being program</u>- Provide and promote programs for emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, financial, social, occupational learning and development well-being. Consider offering well-being activities for all capacities-in office, hybrid, and remote employees.

Partner with or promote local and national organizations that support mental well-being-Consider marketing resources like <u>Kansas City Metro Council Behavioral Health Centers</u>, <u>Healthy KC Resource Guide</u>, <u>NAMI</u>, <u>National Council for Mental Wellbeing</u>, and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

### What can leaders and managers do right now to improve workplace mental health? 3.4

<u>Equip Managers</u>- While companies can work to influence culture, managers are often the people on the ground with employees. It is important that organizations prioritize managers ability to understand workplace mental health and positively impact their team members. Companies that find most success, equip their managers with tips and trainings to learn how to:

- <u>Make a commitment to employee well-being and overall culture of wellness.</u> These action steps might include: developing a well-being calendar of activities, bringing in speakers to discuss various well-being topics, adding a well-being discussion item to regularly scheduled meetings, assigning a well-being officer, or having onsite well-being resources such as a counselor, massage therapist, fitness instructor, or financial advisor.
- <u>Know your company's available resources.</u> Your organization likely already has activities or resources that support employee well-being. An initial step might be to list those resources and openly share these resources with your team members regularly.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> North Carolina Chamber of Commerce



## BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

Make a plan for a mental health crisis. If you have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), you might begin with them in developing a plan. You might also reach out to local mental health agencies or therapists who may help with developing a plan and may be a valuable resource in the event you have an employee who needs support.

For immediate crisis needs, consider calling The Mental Health Crisis Hotline

988

OR THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE: 1-800-273-8255
OR TEXT 741-741 OR VISIT WWW.SUICIDEPREVENTIONLIFELINE.ORG

#### **ADDITIONAL KANSAS CITY RESOURCES:**

- Missouri Crisis Line:
  - Johnson, Jackson, Cass, Lafayette, Platte, Clay and Ray Counties: 1-888-279-8188
- Kansas Crisis Lines:
  - Johnson County: **913-268-0156**
  - Wyandotte County: 913-788-4200

Mental Health America Warmline: 913-281-2251

<u>Consider awareness-building and peer support options-</u> Unfortunately, many individuals don't seek out professional help when they struggle with an emotional health concern. But they may reach out to a friend or trusted colleague. Provide brief mental health awareness training company-wide to help employees understand how to approach and support people in distress. Trained peer supporters can help to provide a listening ear and referral to available mental health resources.

<u>Model healthy boundaries</u>- Employees best learn work-life balance by observing and imitating the behavior of mentors and managers who have themselves adopted a whole-life perspective. Simply put, managers who model strategic boundaries in their own lives give employees permission to establish their own healthy boundaries as well.

<u>Take action</u>-Simple preventive actions can create an environment conducive to mental wellbeing. One successful technique of preventive actions is to offer manager check-ins.

<u>Provide manager check-ins.</u> Managers and team leaders offer regular check-ins with team members to establish open communication about stress, workload, and mental health situations. Here are supervision starters to create a healthy dialogue between a manager and an employee.

- "How are you feeling today?"
- "What are you working on right now?"
- "What is one thing that is most overwhelming that I can take off your plate?"
- "How do you feel I can support you?"
- "Now that you've shared your concern with me, what can I do to support you?"
- "What is your plan for support after you leave my office today?"
- "Is there anyone I can call or reach out to for you for extra support?"
- To the team: "Our team is going through an especially busy period. Is anyone feeling stressed, anxious, or having a difficult time concentrating? Is there anything I can do to help you prioritize or make things easier at work?"

# EMPLOYEE SURVEY: UNDERSTAND YOUR EMPLOYEES' AWARENESS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Engagement surveys are a great tool to measure where your organization is starting from. There are many benefits to regular measurement and collecting employee feedback:

- Understand your culture and exactly what its strengths and challenges are. Is it a lack of safety in accessing resources? Or lack of preparedness by managers to respond to mental health conversations?
- Evaluate what programs, processes, policies, and resources are working and what needs to be improved.
- Maintain accountability to outcome goals, particularly when findings are shared with senior leaders and integrated into business goals.
- Communicate and signal to the rest of employees that your organization is taking action for workplace mental health.

#### There are many different engagement surveys:

- NAMI Chicago
- Workplace Strategies for Mental Health
- Health Action Alliance and One Mind

Research these surveys to find one that best fits your organization or create your own using applicable questions from these or other surveys.



# CHECKLIST: DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

As a company, use this checklist offered in the <u>NAMI Chicago Mental Health Toolkit</u> to assure you are proving enough visibility and accessibility for mental health resources for your employees.<sup>5</sup>

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Uffer frequent and normalized check-ins where personal wellness is a normal, destigmatized topic?
☐ Confirm that every team member knows about the mental health resources available?
☐ Talk about mental healthcare in a deficit-oriented way and about opportunities to cultivate positive mental health?
☐ Conduct ongoing initiatives and training related to mental health and mental wellness?
☐ Ensure all employees know where to find mental health resources offered by your company?
Provide an Employee Assistance Program to help address mental healthcare?
Offer plans that provide equal coverage for mental healthcare as they do or physical healthcare?
Look specifically at mental healthcare co-pays and deductibles, number of sessions covered, required preauthorizations for services or medications, provide a broad spectrum and adequate number of outpatient services, providers, and care settings to address potential needs you've identified and provide maximum accessibility for current and future issues? Assess this at least annually.
☐ Have an active employee wellness program that makes supporting mental health one of its pillars?
☐ Train your managers and supervisors in mental wellness leadership, empathetic management, communication, and conflict resolution strategies that address a wide variety of situations and needs?
☐ Have established guidelines and toolkits for helping managers plan and provide reasonable accommodations for employees with healthcare needs?
Offer a clear, non-punitive route to short-term disability for those who need it due to mental health?
☐ Provide a clear, welcoming, non-punitive path back to the workplace for employees returning from mental health related leave?"



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DISABILITY

What else is top of mind when it comes to building a workplace mental health strategy? Developing a meaningful mental health strategy with diversity, equity, inclusion, and disability in mind affects the culture and employees' feelings of confidence. Develop a framework based on well-documented practices. Research from Mental Health America provides strategies in a mental health toolkit to help employers create the initial framework for a mental health strategy built around the "4 A's": Awareness, Accommodations, Assistance, and Access. 6

#### Awareness:

Build awareness and a supportive workplace culture by conducting mental health training, leading anti-stigma campaigns, and educating employees about benefits and available resources.

#### Accommodations:

Make it simple for employees to request and use reasonable accommodations such as adjustments or modifications that enable people with mental health conditions to perform the essential functions of a job efficiently. Train managers on how to respond and process a request for disability accommodations.

#### Assistance:

Promote services available to assist employees, such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and stress management training. In addition to increased employee productivity, the benefits of EAPs include reduced medical costs, turnover rate, and absences.

#### Access:

Ensure access to mental health services by assessing the specific mental health benefits covered by health insurance providers, including treatment for substance use conditions.

Once you have identified employees' primary needs, establish the goals, action items, and measures for each of the "4 A's" as you develop your mental health strategy. The issues and action items you outline in your mental health strategy will ultimately depend on the needs and capacity of your organization."



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DISABILITY

#### Build a Diverse Workforce

An organization's leadership and workforce should reflect a diverse community representing identities. Create an inclusive workplace culture. Employees who feel represented and welcomed during the hiring process will be excited to join the organization.

Consider the following ideas for recruiting diverse candidates and fostering an inclusive workforce:

- Look at what already likely exists in your organization: the business model. Depending on the industry and region, the business model is often written in a way that appeals to diverse markets. Think about how these plans described in the business model can apply to your own workforce and contribute to your organization's diversity goals.
- Understand the makeup of your workforce and strategize how to celebrate and embrace a diverse and inclusive workplace with your employees' needs through a trauma-informed lens. Start with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) specific employee survey or explore employee resource groups that could help build an inclusive culture.
- Formalize an organizational policy supporting DEI within the workforce. Integrate mental health and well-being along with inclusion, diversity and equity initiatives.
- Use language that is accessible to marginalized people or people in communities where getting mental health help is stigmatized. Use correct pronouns and focus on using language that will connect with employees.
- From a top down effort, encourage open conversations and learnings in all aspects of your organization to feel safe. Offer virtual and live DEI training such as:
  - What is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?
  - Multicultural Awareness
  - Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions
- Consider hosting book clubs as a source of inclusion and creating open conversations. The book list could include:
  - Dangerous Indifference: The Case for Culturally Responsive Leadership, Dr. Nicole D. Price (Author, Narrator), Dr. Ian A. Roberts (Author, Narrator), LP Publishing (Publisher)
  - Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions, Tiffany Jana, Michael Baran
  - Inclusion on Purpose: An Intersectional Approach to Creating a Culture of Belonging at Work, Ruchika Tulshyan, Ijeoma Oluo
  - Inclusive Conversations: Fostering Equity, Empathy, and Belonging Across Differences, Mary-Frances Winters, Robin Miles



## TRAUMA-INFORMED WORKFORCE

What does it mean to be Trauma-Informed? Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) uses a four Rs rubric to describe a "trauma-informed" organization:

- Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system
- Respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
- Actively resist re-traumatization" <sup>7</sup>

#### What is Trauma-Informed Care?

There are several myths surrounding a trauma-informed workforce that can lead to misunderstandings and ineffective implementation. This information is intended to start the dialogue in your organization, not as a source for trauma-informed care training.

#### Myths vs. Truths

Myth: Trauma-informed care is only relevant for individuals with a history of severe trauma.

**Truth:** Trauma can take many forms, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, neglect, and other adverse childhood experiences. Even individuals who have not experienced severe trauma can benefit from trauma-informed care principles, which can promote healing, resilience, and well-being.

Myth: Trauma-informed care is too expensive and time-consuming.

**Truth:** While implementing trauma-informed care may require some upfront investment, it can ultimately lead to cost savings by reducing the need for expensive treatments, absenteeism and increasing employee productivity and retention. It can be implemented through small changes in practices and policies

Myth: Trauma-informed care is only relevant for mental health services.

**Truth:** Trauma-informed care is relevant for all types of workforces. Trauma-informed care principles can help employers create safe and supportive environments, build trusting relationships, and respond to team members needs in a sensitive and effective way.

## TRAUMA-INFORMED WORKFORCE

Myth: Trauma-informed care is about avoiding triggers and creating safe spaces.

**Truth:** While creating safe and supportive environments is an important aspect of trauma-informed care, it is not the only focus.

Myth: Trauma-informed care is a one-size-fits-all approach.

**Truth:** Trauma-informed care is a flexible and individualized approach that recognizes the unique needs and experiences of each individual. Employers must be able to adapt to different cultural, social, and contextual factors that can impact an individual's trauma history and response.

Besides understanding the myths and truths about employees who have experienced trauma, here are other ways to support all employees:<sup>8</sup>

- Feeling part of a team and having social support on the job can buffer workplace stress.
- Seeing a productive change as a result of work.
- Feeling competent to apply a trauma-informed approach, as a result of effective training and education.
- Receiving regular and predictable supervision as a way to prevent, monitor, and respond to stress.
- Practicing response to stressful situations in order to have the skills needed to manage stress.



### **CALL TO ACTION!**

Hello employer partners,

Workplace mental health has long been a focus for Healthy KC. This guide will be accompanied by a three-part workshop series the "Leadership LAB" to make the information from this guide actionable and individualized. We will review where we are currently as a business community, to challenge ourselves using a Strategic Doing mindset, and to grow. Please join us, bringing a scientist's mindset of curiosity, and see how implementing mental health initiatives can work when decisive action is taken.

#### Leadership LAB Events. Learn, Take Action, Build

Workshop 1	L	<ul> <li>LEARN from others through roundtable discussions Introduction of the Mental Health Toolkit: Take Action</li> <li>Commit to starting or continuing a discussion about workplace mental health in your organization.</li> <li>Explore strengths and opportunities for change.</li> </ul>
Workshop 2	А	= ACTION Plan and Implement (Did you explore your strengths? Opportunities? What do you commit to doing next? How do you have difficult conversations in your organization?) Strategic Doing session. Workbook and survey completion to take back to organization.
Workshop 3	В	= BUILD Success and Share Our Local Case Studies (What are the little wins from your action plan? What were the lessons learned? Next steps?) Panel discussing successes and obstacles

#### Action Pledge

<i>I</i> ,	_, commit to championing a strong mental health initiative
within my organization,	I will do so by supporting the
evaluation of our organization's	values, policies, leadership training, and peer efforts, and then
I will create a plan that encourag	ges mental health and well-being for all employees.

### **RESOURCES**

<u>Dept. of Health and Human Services</u>

**HERO** 

World Health Organization

Mental Health America

Health Action

Mind Share Partners

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

Center for Mental Health

Conversation Guide for Managers

Workplace Mental Health Playbook

*SAMHSA* 

APA Inclusive Language Guidelines

Trauma Informed Approach to the Workforce

Trauma Informed Oregon

### Mental Health Toolkits and Resources

NAMI Chicago

Humana

North Carolina Chamber of Commerce

<u>US Surgeon General's Report on Mental</u> Health

The Leadership Collaborative of KC



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