To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Juanita Kwok

Date: June 22, 2022

Subject: Proposal for Determining Impact of Mental Health in the Workplace during the Pandemic

**Audience**

My formal report will be addressed to BC’s Minister of Health, Adrian Dix.

**Introduction**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. Since then, the workplace and mental space of corporate employees have never been the same. The change from a five-day office work week to a new “work from home” reality created an imbalance between personal and professional life. Seemingly overnight, there was no separation in work and employees were working longer hours and had zero face-to-face interaction with their colleagues. This fundamental shift in workplace culture contributed to a variety of catalysts that would shape the workplace environment we see today.

**Statement of Problem**

As technology progresses and the need for human interaction has dwindled over the past two years with Zoom calls and remote learning, there has been a direct correlation to increased feelings of loneliness, disconnect, and social anxiety. Now that we enter an “in-person” world again, what does that look like? There have been endless stories of employee burnout. Companies have had a hard time retaining their employees due to the additional stress of deadlines, loss of passion, and lack of resources.

**Proposed Solution**

Providing adequate employee resources and counselling services act as a good starting point. Beyond that, employees are looking for sustainable workplaces that give proper work life balance and tools to help them succeed. This involves a culture shift as well as an awareness campaign from the BC Ministry of Health to create programs and funding to promote a healthy work life.

**Scope**

In order to access the feasibility of how COVID-19 has shaped mental health and performance in the workplace, I plan to pursue the following five areas of inquiry:

1. Employees’ personal experiences with how their life has changed (personally and professionally) since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic
2. If employees have experienced burnout and if so, what was the impact?
3. What activities do employees participate in outside of work?
4. What have employers done to improve employee morale and retention?
5. How is office workplace culture shifting and what trends do we see for the future?

**Methods**

The primary data sources for this formal report will be achieved by conducting personal interviews with employees in various industries, creating an in-depth survey, and examining statistical data sources. This will give my research first-hand experience from individuals as well as an anonymous platform to answer to share insights they may not be comfortable with publicly. Statistical data gives numerical insights to trends over the years and can be further interpreted to form a conclusion.

The secondary sources I plan to use are recent publications on mental health in the workplace and a review of an ebook published by Oracle titled “11 Ways to Prevent Employee Burnout”.

**My Qualifications**

I have been working in the corporate world for over three years. During this time, I have experienced the typical week in office, five days a week. I have also experienced two years of working from home full time and how that can negatively impact your mental health. Currently, I work a hybrid work model with alternating days in person and remote. Given these three options, I can confidently give an opinion on what has worked best for me and provide recommendations for each individual to maximize their productivity and wellbeing in the workplace. I have also taken multiple human resources classes at UBC focused on what makes an effective, engaging, and fulfilled workplace.

**Conclusion**

During the pandemic, many deep-rooted issues came to light and thankfully, mental health is now talked about more than ever. Despite this, there are many people still struggling at work trying to maintain a balanced lifestyle while growing their career. This report explores more resources and support for employees to achieve this while boosting employee productivity.