

Wellness Program

1033.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on establishing and maintaining a proactive wellness program for department members.

The wellness program is intended to be a holistic approach to a member's well-being and encompasses aspects such as physical fitness, mental health, and overall wellness.

Additional information on member wellness is provided in the:

- Line-of-Duty Deaths Policy 1032.
- Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy 1006.
- USM Policy VII-3.00 (Policy on Wellness Program) [See attachment: USM Wellness Program - Policy VII300.pdf](#)

1033.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Critical incident – An event or situation that may cause a strong emotional, cognitive, or physical reaction that has the potential to interfere with daily life.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) – A standardized approach using a discussion format to provide education, support, and emotional release opportunities for members involved in work-related critical incidents.

Peer support – Mental and emotional wellness support provided by peers trained to help members cope with critical incidents and certain personal or professional problems.

Release time - An approved absence from duty during the work day without loss of any pay for the purpose of attending an employer-approved wellness activity.

1033.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department to prioritize member wellness to foster fitness for duty and support a healthy quality of life for department members. The department will maintain a wellness program that supports its members with proactive wellness resources, critical incident response, and follow-up support.

1033.3 WELLNESS COORDINATOR

The Chief of Police shall appoint a trained wellness coordinator. The Coordinator should report directly to the Chief of Police or the authorized designee and should collaborate with advisers (e.g., Human Resource Services, legal counsel, licensed psychotherapist, qualified health professionals), as appropriate, to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including but not limited to:

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- (a) Identifying wellness support providers (e.g., licensed psychotherapists, external peer support providers, physical therapists, dietitians, physical fitness trainers holding accredited certifications).
 - 1. As appropriate, selected providers should be trained and experienced in providing mental wellness support and counseling to public safety personnel.
 - 2. When practicable, the department should not use the same licensed psychotherapist for both member wellness support and fitness for duty evaluations.
- (b) Developing management and operational procedures for department peer support members, such as:
 - 1. Peer support member selection and retention.
 - 2. Training and applicable certification requirements.
 - 3. Deployment.
 - 4. Managing potential conflicts between peer support members and those seeking service.
 - 5. Monitoring and mitigating peer support member emotional fatigue (i.e., compassion fatigue) associated with providing peer support.
 - 6. Using qualified peer support personnel from other public safety agencies or outside organizations for department peer support, as appropriate.
- (c) Verifying members have reasonable access to peer support or licensed psychotherapist support.
- (d) Establishing procedures for CISDs, including:
 - 1. Defining the types of incidents that may initiate debriefings.
 - 2. Steps for organizing debriefings.
- (e) Facilitating the delivery of wellness information, training, and support through various methods appropriate for the situation (e.g., phone hotlines, electronic applications).
- (f) Verifying a confidential, appropriate, and timely Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for members. This also includes:
 - 1. Obtaining a written description of the program services.
 - 2. Providing for the methods to obtain program services.
 - 3. Providing referrals to the EAP for appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up resources.
 - 4. Obtaining written procedures and guidelines for referrals to, or mandatory participation in, the program.
 - 5. Obtaining training for supervisors in their role and responsibilities, and identification of member behaviors that would indicate the existence of member concerns, problems, or issues that could impact member job performance.

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6. Meeting the requirements of Md. Code PS § 3-523 for no cost mental health assistance for officers to address their personal and work-related concerns, including stress, financial issues, legal issues, family problems, office conflicts, and alcohol and substance abuse disorders.
- (g) Assisting members who have become disabled with application for federal government benefits such as those offered through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (34 USC § 10281 et seq.).
 1. The coordinator should work with appropriate department liaisons to assist qualified members and survivors with benefits, wellness support, and counseling services, as applicable, when there has been a member death (see the Line-of-Duty Deaths Policy for additional guidance).

1033.4 DEPARTMENT PEER SUPPORT

1033.4.1 PEER SUPPORT MEMBER SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of a department peer support member will be at the discretion of the Coordinator. Selection should be based on the member's:

- Desire to be a peer support member.
- Experience or tenure.
- Demonstrated ability as a positive role model.
- Ability to communicate and interact effectively.
- Evaluation by supervisors and any current peer support members.

1033.4.2 PEER SUPPORT MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the department peer support members include:

- (a) Providing pre- and post-critical incident support.
- (b) Presenting department members with periodic training on wellness topics, including but not limited to:
 1. Stress management.
 2. Suicide prevention.
 3. How to access support resources.
- (c) Providing referrals to licensed psychotherapists and other resources, where appropriate.
 1. Referrals should be made to department-designated resources in situations that are beyond the scope of the peer support member's training.

1033.4.3 PEER SUPPORT MEMBER TRAINING

A department peer support member should complete department-approved training prior to being assigned.

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1033.5 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFINGS

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing should occur as soon as practicable following a critical incident. The Coordinator or designee is responsible for organizing the debriefing. Notes and recorded statements shall not be taken because the sole purpose of the debriefing is to help mitigate the stress-related effects of a critical incident.

The debriefing is not part of any investigative process. Care should be taken not to release or repeat any communication made during a debriefing unless otherwise authorized by policy, law, or a valid court order.

Attendance at the debriefing should only include peer support members and those directly involved in the incident.

1033.6 PEER SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS

Although the department will honor the sensitivity of communications with peer support members, there is no legal privilege to such communications except as provided in Md. Code PS § 3-523.

1033.7 PHYSICAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Coordinator is responsible for establishing guidelines for any on-duty physical wellness program, including the following:

- (a) Voluntary participation by members
- (b) Allowable physical fitness activities
- (c) Permitted times and locations for physical fitness activities
- (d) Acceptable use of department-provided physical fitness facilities and equipment
- (e) Individual health screening and fitness assessment
- (f) Individual education (e.g., nutrition, sleep habits, proper exercise, injury prevention) and goal-setting
- (g) Standards for fitness incentive programs. The coordinator should collaborate with the appropriate entities (e.g., human resources, legal counsel) to verify that any standards are nondiscriminatory.
- (h) Maintenance of physical wellness logs (e.g., attendance, goals, standards, progress)
- (i) Ongoing support and evaluation

1033.7.1 OTHER WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Refer to Section III of USM Policy VII-3.00 (Policy on Wellness Program) for detailed provisions on other wellness program activities.

1033.7.2 RELEASE TIME FOR WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Refer to Section IV of USM Policy VII-300 (Policy on Wellness Programs) for detailed provisions on release time for wellness activities.

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1033.8 OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Coordinator is responsible for other wellness program components:

- (a) Emotional wellness component focuses on the mental health and emotional resilience of employees. Key activities and resources include:
 - 1. Access to culturally competent mental health professionals.
 - 2. Stress management workshops, mindfulness sessions, and yoga practices.
 - 3. Social events to build a supportive, inclusive environment.
 - 4. Activities such as gratitude and mindfulness challenges.
 - 5. Personalized emotional wellness support.
 - 6. Employee feedback collection for continuous program improvement.
- (b) Financial wellness focuses on improving employees' financial security and well-being that includes:
 - 1. Workshops and access to financial advisors.
 - 2. Tools for budgeting and managing debt.
 - 3. Resources for student loan assistance and retirement planning.
- (c) Social wellness focuses on building community by:
 - 1. Organizing team-building activities and volunteer opportunities
 - 2. Providing spaces for social interaction and mentorship programs
- (d) Occupational wellness focuses on work-life balance, safety, and employee recognition:
 - 1. Ensuring employees are not exposed to harmful conditions
 - 2. Providing regular health and safety training and health risk assessments.
 - 3. Recognizing wellness achievements.
- (e) Intellectual wellness encourages employees to engage in continuous learning, such as:
 - 1. Offering courses, seminars, and book clubs.
 - 2. Promoting intellectual challenges and creative projects.
- (f) Environmental wellness initiatives include:
 - 1. Maintaining safe workspaces and providing necessary protective equipment.
 - 2. Conducting regular inspections and training employees on emergency procedures.
- (g) Family wellness initiatives support employees in balancing their work and family lives:
 - 1. Providing family-accommodating assignments and enhancing family communication.
 - 2. Promoting family health and overall well-being.

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1033.9 WELLNESS PROGRAM AUDIT

At least annually, the Coordinator or authorized designee should audit the effectiveness of the department's wellness program and prepare a report summarizing the findings. The report shall not contain the names of members participating in the wellness program, and should include the following information:

- Data on the types of support services provided
- Wait times for support services
- Participant feedback, if available
- Program improvement recommendations
- Policy revision recommendations

The Coordinator or designee should present the completed audit to the Chief of Police for review and consideration of updates to improve program effectiveness.

1033.10 EAP REQUIRED ASSISTANCE

Before returning to full duty, the following should be offered or provided to an officer as part of the EAP (Md. Code PS § 3-523):

- (a) A voluntary mental health consultation and voluntary counseling services if the officer was involved in an incident that contained an accident resulting in a fatality.
- (b) A mandatory mental health consultation and voluntary counseling services for an officer seriously injured, involved in a shooting, or involved in a use of force that resulted in a death or a serious injury.

1033.11 SUPPORT RESOURCES

- **State of Maryland, Department of Budget and Management (DBM):** Voluntary wellness programs for state employees, including wellness webinars, healthy challenges, and coaching <http://dbm.maryland.gov/benefits/Pages/WellnessHome.aspx>
- **UMB URecFit and Wellness Peer Program:** Wellness resources available for the UMB community <http://www.umaryland.edu/urecfi/>
- **UMB Lactation Support and Education Program:** Supports nursing mothers with consultative services and lactation resources <http://www.umaryland.edu/hrs/current-employees/well-being/wellness-resources/>
- **UMB Work-Life Balance Resources:** Resources that help employees balance work and personal life, including daycare, alternate work hours, and financial well-being <http://www.umaryland.edu/hrs/current-employees/well-being/work-life-balance-resources/>

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- **UMB Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Confidential support for emotional well-being, financial guidance, and work-life balance <http://www.umaryland.edu/hrs/current-employees/well-being/employee-assistance-program-eap/>
- **UMB Behavioral Evaluation and Threat Assessment (BETA):** Promotes safety by helping employees recognize and report concerning behavior <http://www.umaryland.edu/studenthealth/urgent-needs/behavioral-evaluation-and-threat-assessment-beta/>

1033.12 TRAINING

The Coordinator or authorized designee shall collaborate with the E and T Lieutenant to provide all members with regular education and training on topics related to member physical and mental health and wellness, including but not limited to:

- The availability and range of department wellness support systems.
- Suicide prevention.
- Recognizing and managing mental distress, emotional fatigue, post-traumatic stress, and other possible reactions to trauma.
- Alcohol and substance disorder awareness.
- Countering sleep deprivation and physical fatigue.
- Anger management.
- Marriage and family wellness.
- Benefits of exercise and proper nutrition.
- Effective time and personal financial management skills.

Training materials, curriculum, and attendance records should be forwarded to the E and T Lieutenant as appropriate for inclusion in training records.

Attachments

USM Wellness Program - Policy VII300.pdf

VII – 3.00 – POLICY ON WELLNESS PROGRAMS

(Approved by the Board of Regent October 9, 2015)

I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY:

To encourage University System of Maryland (USM) Staff employees to participate in Wellness programs offered by USM institutions and other state entities in order to improve health and maintain a healthy lifestyle. This policy applies to all Nonexempt and Exempt Staff Employees on Regular or Contingent status.

II. DEFINITIONS

Release Time – An approved absence from duty during the work day without loss of any pay for the purpose of attending an employer-approved wellness activity.

III. WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Each institution shall establish a Wellness Program for employees.

- A. To the extent that such resources are available on campus, employees shall have access to:
 - 1. Institution recreation, fitness and pool facilities;
 - 2. Campus wellness and benefits fairs;
 - 3. Wellness information on campus websites, employee newsletters and other sources;
 - 4. Relaxation and meditation rooms on campus; and
 - 5. Retirement and other financial wellness planning workshops and other information sources.
- B. To the extent that such resources are available, institutions may provide low- or no-cost wellness activities and benefits to employees, which may include:
 - 1. Smoking cessation, nutrition and weight loss, stress relief, and other classes to promote wellness;
 - 2. Exercise, dance, and other physical fitness classes and programs;
 - 3. Collaborations with private and local government fitness and wellness program providers to provide discounted access to institution employees;
 - 4. Health screening programs;

5. Employee Assistance services, including counseling and work-life referral services; and access to mental health counselors through an Employee Assistance program; and
6. Other wellness activities & benefits that the institution may establish.

IV. RELEASE TIME FOR WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Each institution shall provide a reasonable amount of release time for employees to participate in specified wellness activities and events taking place at the institution, operations permitting and with the permission of the supervisor.

- A. Such release time may be used for screenings, preventive health services, seminars, classes and other special events provided as part of the institution's wellness program.
- B. Release time may be in the form of sick leave, paid administrative leave, or other form of paid time away from duty, as determined by the institution.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:

Each President shall identify his/her designee(s) as appropriate for this policy, develop procedures as necessary to implement this policy, communicate this policy and applicable procedures to his/her institutional community, and post it on its institutional website.