

TASK FORCE CHAIRS

Bree Buchanan

William Slease

Chris Newbold

ENTITIES REPRESENTED:

ABA LAW PRACTICE DIVISION

ABA CPR PROFESSIONALISM

ABA/HAZELDEN STUDY

APRL

ALPS

CoLAP

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF

JUSTICES

NALSAP

NCBE

NCPO

NOBC

TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

Anne Brafford

Don Campbell

Josh Camson

Lindsey Draper

Charles Gruber

Judith Gundersen

Terry Harrell

Yvette Hourigan

Jordan Huck

David Jaffe

Tracy Kepler

Patrick Krill

Douglas Leonard

Sarah Myers

Shannon Nordstrom

Chris Newbold

Chief Justice Paul Reiber

Casey Ryan

Judge David Shaheed

William Slease

Kathleen Uston

Jonathan White

Robin Wolpert

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LAWYER WELL-BEING

Creating a Movement To Improve Well-Being in the Legal Profession

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being Celebrates Two Years
and a Changing Legal Culture

The National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being is celebrating two years since the release of its groundbreaking, profession-changing report, [The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change](#). During the month of August 2017, the Report was published, and both the ABA and the Conference of Chief Justices passed Resolutions urging all states to review and consider the Report's 44 recommendations.

A mere two years later, the Task Force is proud to announce that 29 states have established a multi-stakeholder task force (often initiated by the Supreme Court's Chief Justice or executives of the state bar association) or have undertaken major initiatives to bring about a culture change in the legal profession (see www.lawyerwellbeing.net for interactive map). Using the Report as a springboard, these states have formed working groups or task forces; revised regulations related to CLE programming and to bar admissions, commissioned studies; hosted well-being summits; or reallocated funds to enhance the well-being and support services offered to members of the profession.

The Report was issued after two national 2016 studies confirmed that lawyers struggle greatly with substance abuse and mental health challenges. Born of a passion to candidly confront these challenges, the Task Force began as a grassroots movement initiated by the ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP), the National Organization of Bar Counsel (NOBC), and the Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers (APRL). Two years later, its membership has grown to 13 national legal associations (some within the ABA and some independent associations) that represent the judiciary, regulators, bar examiners, lawyers' assistance programs, law schools, as well as individuals representing the risk-management and insurance industry and global law firms.

The Report calls to action all stakeholders in the legal profession and challenges them to both reduce impairments and increase lawyer well-being. "Our report offers practical recommendations for stakeholders' unique needs and abilities to bring about systemic change in how they tend to their own members' well-being," states Bree Buchanan, a founding co-chair and author of the Report. With the ultimate goal of improving professionalism, protecting the public, and

preserving the rule of law – while also enhancing both quality of life and profitability of law practice – the Report sets out a path that effectively addresses and reduces impairments, such as substance use disorders and mental health problems, and the promotion of overall well-being.

Since publication of the Report, the Task Force has developed a website, www.lawyerwellbeing.net, which provides a link to the Report, a working definition of lawyer well-being, and information about the well-being initiatives spreading across the legal profession in the United States. “Task Force members have crisscrossed the country speaking to law firms, lawyer associations, and judicial officers about the Report’s recommendations and, without fail, the reception has been warm with audience members expressing high interest in learning about well-being initiatives,” says Chris Newbold, a co-chair and author of the Report.

The Task Force remains proud of its work and is poised to move to the next stage: serving as a clearinghouse and resource bank for well-being programs and initiatives, as well as offering education and support to improve the robustness of stakeholders’ well-being efforts. “We look forward to continuing to lead the discussion and to raise awareness of the critical component of well-being in every lawyer’s skill set,” states Bill Slease, a co-chair and author of the Report.

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