



## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

### RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the stresses faced by local elected officials are increasing due to a degradation in the tone of civil discourse;

AND WHEREAS additional mental health supports for local elected officials would be beneficial beyond what is provided by the Medical Services Plan and extended health plans;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NCLGA and UBCM call upon the Province of British Columbia to implement initiatives that offer mental health supports tailored to the needs of local elected leaders in British Columbia.

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### Backgrounder:

Elected officials face considerable stress due to the nature of their roles, which involve making difficult decisions, managing diverse interests, and being under constant public scrutiny. The rise in vitriol and personal attacks in public dialogue exacerbates the mental health strain on elected officials and can lead to significant mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and burnout.

The mental well-being of elected officials is directly tied to their capacity for effective leadership. Leaders who are mentally healthy are more likely to make sound decisions, communicate clearly, and engage constructively with their constituents. Proactively addressing mental health challenges helps prevent burnout, enabling officials to serve their communities effectively throughout their term.

Local governments, especially in smaller communities, frequently lack the resources to provide adequate mental health support for their officials. Provincial initiatives could fill this gap by offering specialized resources and support tailored to the unique challenges local elected officials encounter.

In addition to addressing resource gaps, provincial initiatives could play a crucial role in reducing the stigma surrounding mental health. By promoting open discussions about mental well-being, it would encourage elected officials to seek help without fear of judgment. This cultural shift within local government could set a powerful example for the broader community, emphasizing the importance of mental health and normalizing the pursuit of support.

Offering a province-wide mental health initiatives for local elected officials could significantly encourage a more diverse range of individuals to run for public office. Many potential candidates from underrepresented groups may be deterred by the perceived mental health challenges associated with public service, such as stress, public scrutiny, and the increasingly hostile tone of civil discourse. The existence of initiatives that offer mental health supports tailored to the needs of local elected leaders in British Columbia could help mitigate these concerns, making public office a more viable and appealing option for people from diverse backgrounds.