LACSW Menopause Report Back

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a critical disconnect between the lived reality of menopausal employees and the current workplace culture. The great majority of participants indicate that there is a lack of formal procedure or understanding from management to help them navigate their symptoms underscoring the hurdles these employees face in maintaining their professional standing and productivity while managing an inevitable and normal biological transition. The findings of this study culminate in recommendations in five key areas.

1. **Raise awareness, educate, and decrease stigma about menopause**

To better support the needs of women experiencing menopause requires a change in the attitudes of all employees. This cultural transformation cannot be accomplished without increased awareness, training, ongoing information dissemination, and dialogue among stakeholders about menopause and its impact. In the same Motion governing this report, the City Council has asked the Personnel Department to report separately on options to mandate supervisor training. The quantitative and qualitative data in this study indicate the definite need for:

- City-wide training of supervisors
- Distribution and display of informational materials
- Educational modules for employees
- Employee affinity groups where women can share, learn, and support each other
- Ongoing awareness campaigns in regular City communications

2. **Immediate support for menopause symptoms**

Culture change is fundamental for enabling employees to advocate for themselves, however some immediate workplace improvements could be implemented. The City Council has asked the Personnel Department to report separately on practical workplace solutions. Small but impactful changes to the physical environment indicated in the survey data include:

- Short at-will breaks and where possible locating spaces for breaks
- Temperature control such as fans and/or cool rooms
- Ready availability of ice and water
- Improvements or different uniforms to accommodate conditions in the field and office
- Improved access to restrooms and providing free menstruation supplies

3. **Policy change**

The data indicate that women view some accommodations as vital to their ongoing well-being during menopause and some of these accommodations may require policy change. The City

Council has asked the Personnel Department to report separately on how the City's leave and benefits policies can accommodate people experiencing menopause. The findings of this study on the attitudes and behavior of menopause in the workplace finds support for the following policy changes:

- Improve work schedule flexibility
- Offer flexible remote work options
- Adjust sick day allotments and/or leave policies to include menopause
- Improve healthcare and insurance support
- Add menopause to the list of characteristics protected from discrimination or harassment in the City's Ordinance on Non-Discrimination in Employment

4. **Ongoing evaluation**

The Motion asks how to provide iterative updates on how the City better can support people experiencing menopause:

- The Commission on the Status of Women working with the Personnel Department could provide updates on how the City is supporting the needs of employees experiencing menopause and on the City's work to foster regular citywide dialogue. An initial update can be made one year after directives and/or policies are implemented followed by a second report two years later.
- If asked, the Commission could provide progress evaluations with surveys and/or roundtables.

5. **Assess the feasibility of official menopause-friendly accreditation**

MiDOVia's menopause-friendly accreditation process addresses all the recommendations of this report. It is the only such accrediting process available in the United States. Attaining official accreditation would mean that recommendations have been implemented and are being monitored and updated according to current best practices and through periodic reviews. Accreditation requires a small annual fee but significant staff support, therefore:

- The CSW recommends that the City assess the feasibility of pursuing official menopause-friendly accreditation through MiDOVia.