

# **It Starts with a Question: A Health System's Suicide Prevention Journey**

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# Disclosures

- No Conflicts of interest

# Goals for Today

- ✓ Explain suicide risk among healthcare workers
- ✓ Explain barriers that hinder effective intervention
- ✓ Resources needed to safely implement suicide prevention & anti-stigma programs
- ✓ Culture & values needed for gatekeeper training
- ✓ Demonstrate unique power dynamics and challenges to psychological safety in healthcare workers
- ✓ Changes necessary to move forward

# Suicide Rates in Healthcare

Medical residents:

2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death  
(1<sup>st</sup> for males)

Physicians

3x higher rates  
300-400/ year

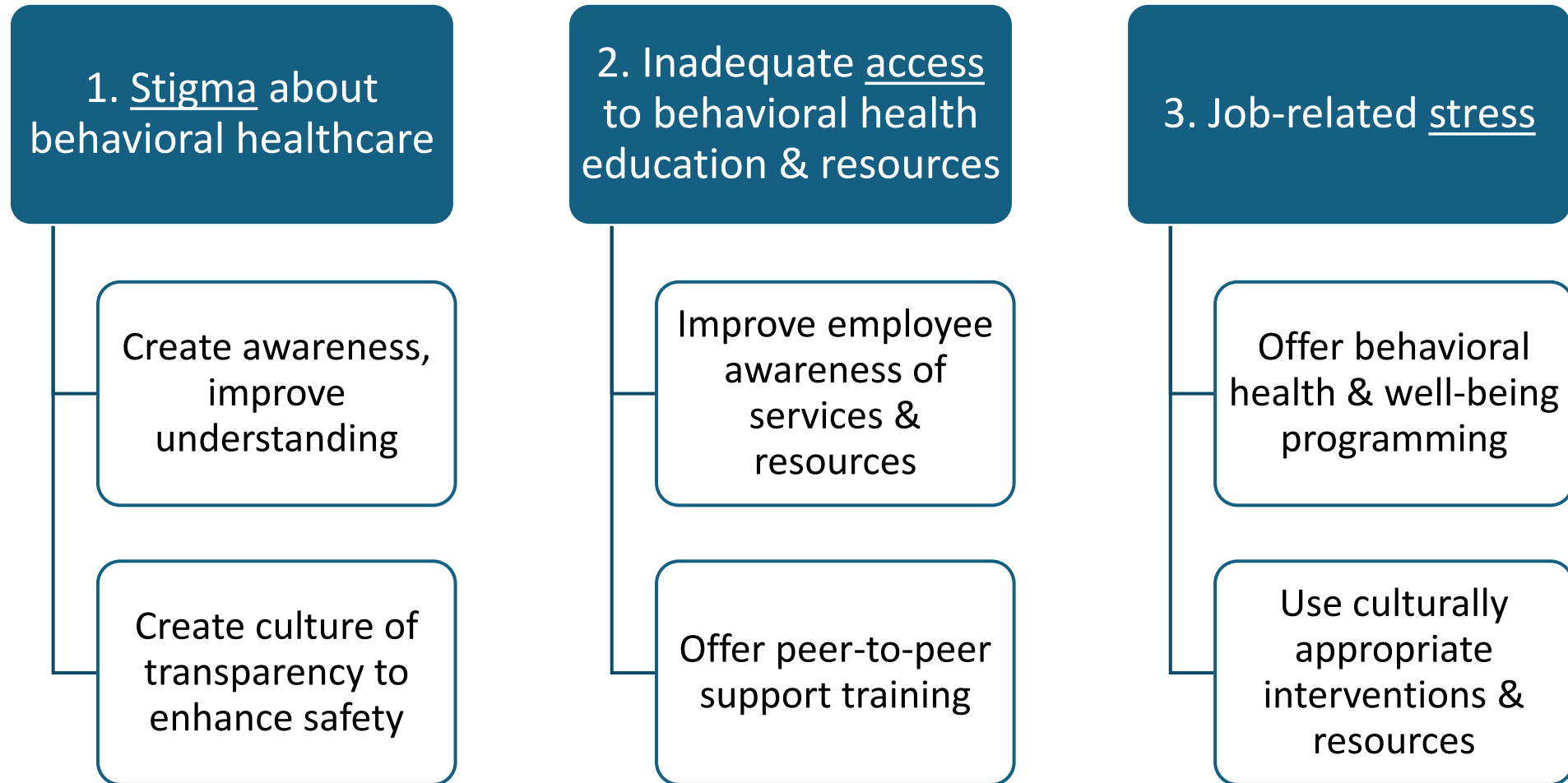
Female nurses

2x higher rates

EMTs:

2.5x  
higher rates

# Hospitals: 3 Drivers for Suicide & Action Steps\*



\* Health Research & Education Trust, in partnership w/ American Hospital Association (2022)

# A Structured Approach to Suicide Prevention



- Based in Columbus, Ohio (1891)
- Nationally recognized
- Not-for-profit
- United Methodist Church
- 35,000 associates, physicians, volunteers
- 19 hospitals
- 200+ ambulatory sites
- 50 Ohio counties

## Well-Being Team Mission and Vision

Our team takes care of those who take care of others, so that OhioHealth can continue to provide safe, high quality patient care.

### OhioHealth

Mission

To improve the health of those we serve.

Vision

To provide exceptional care for all through experiences that earn a lifetime of trust.

### Well-Being Team

Mission

*To improve the well-being of those who serve.*

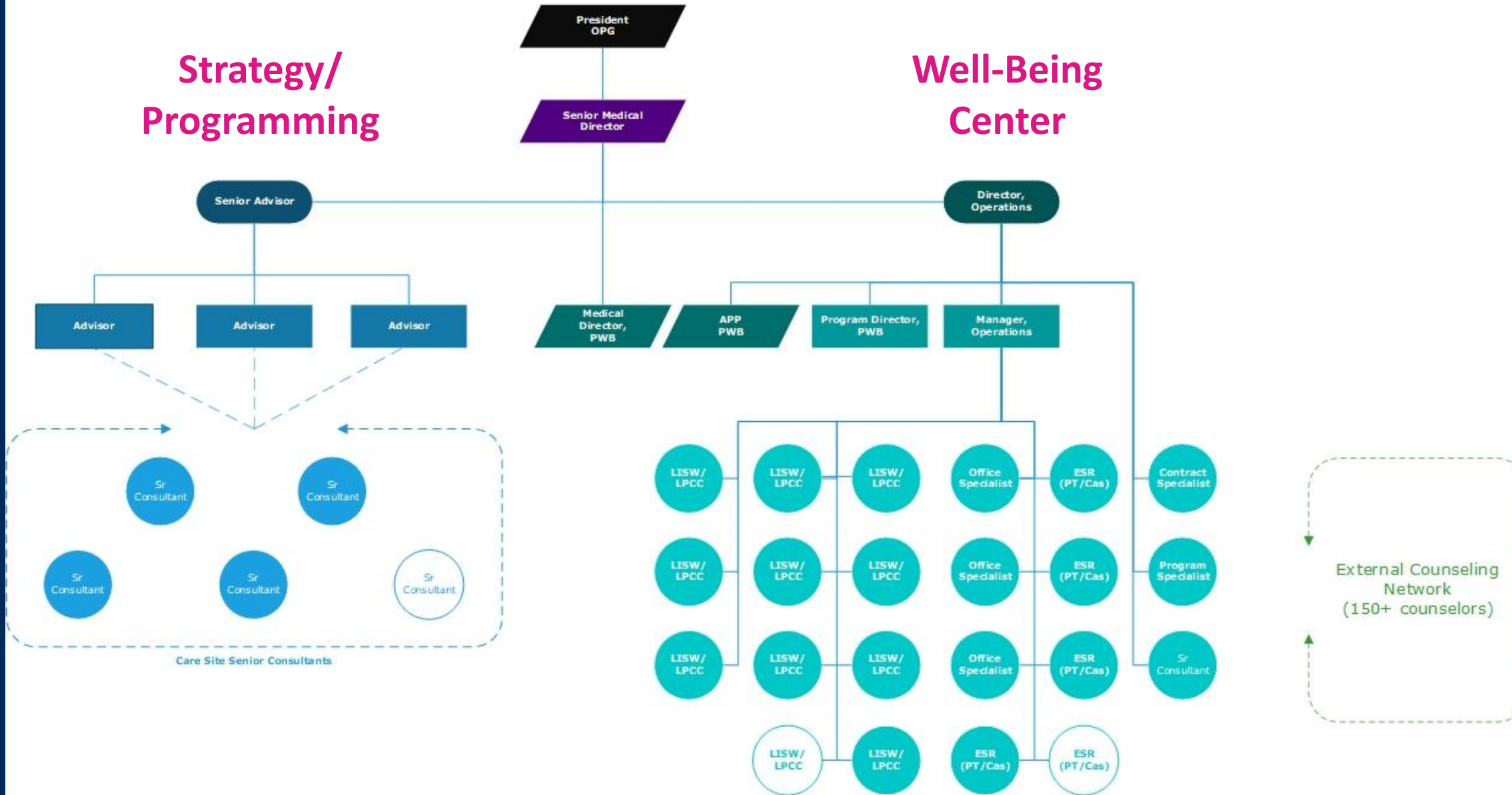
Vision

*To provide trusted expertise and exceptional care so all may thrive.*

# Well-Being at OhioHealth



# Well-Being Division Org Chart

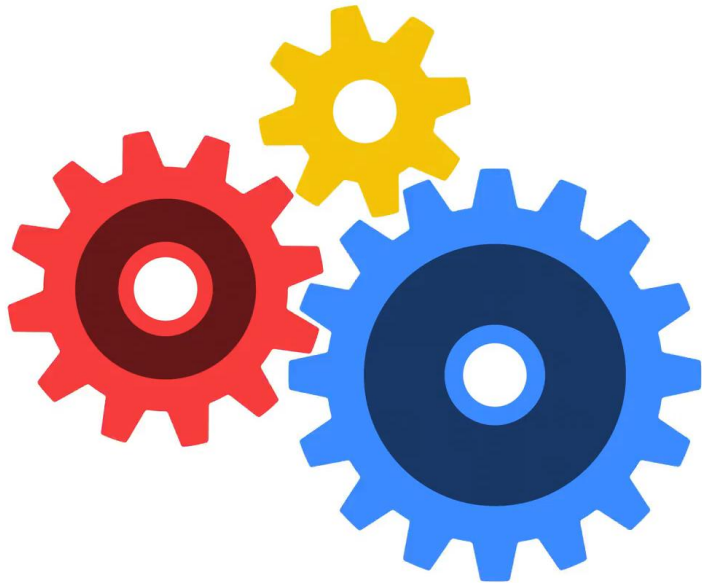


# System Alignment

As *well-being experts*, we partner with teams across the system to provide consultation and advising services in support of broader organizational goals



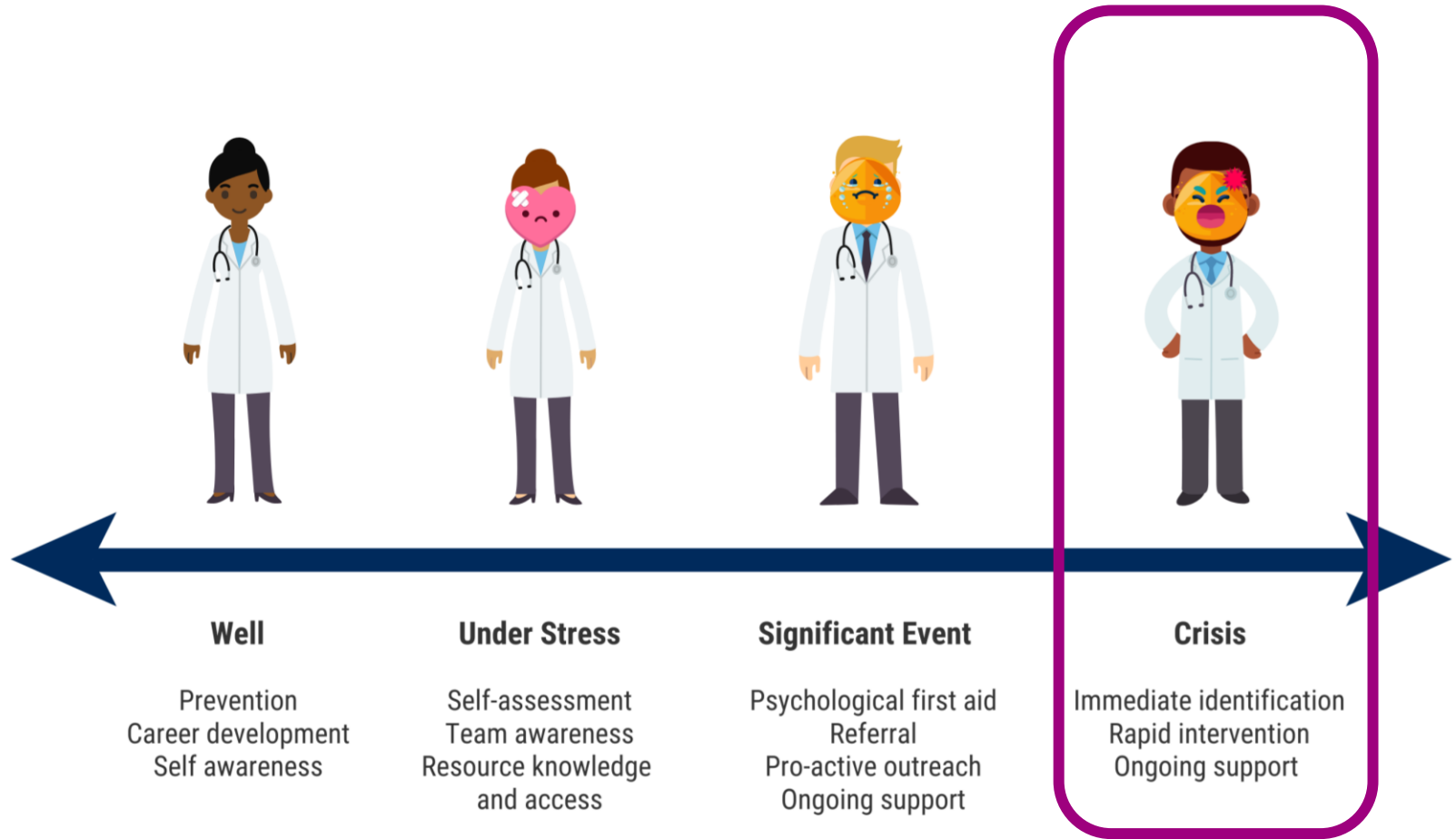
# The Approach to Suicide Prevention at OhioHealth



- Integrated into larger body of work
  - Tied into existing de-stigma campaigns
  - Aligned with quality and patient safety

# The Well-Being Continuum

**Well-Being** is the optimal state of physical, emotional, spiritual, social and financial health, *not simply the absence of burnout.*



# Well-Being Portfolio



# Suicide Prevention at OhioHealth: A Comprehensive Model

## Programming



- Advocacy/Outreach
  - Marketing
  - Anti-stigma
  - Help-seeking
- Education/Training
  - Gatekeeper
- Policy
  - Licensure / Credentialing
- Outcomes/Research

## Supports

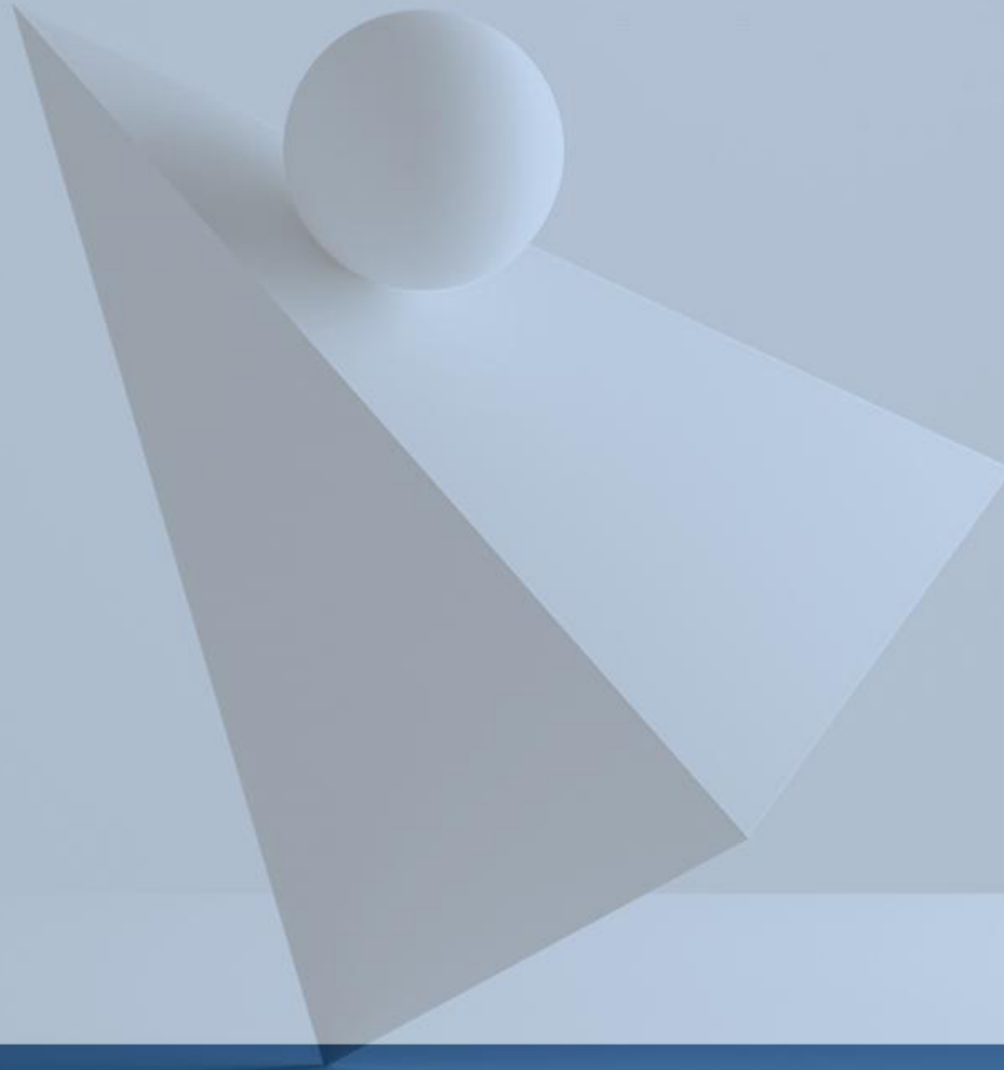


- Leadership
  - Top-down
  - Cross settings
  - Employee benefit
- Infrastructure
  - Logistics
  - Data collection
- Partnerships

# Key Values

<b>ACCEPT</b>	Reduce stigma
<b>ADVOCATE</b>	Create culture of advocacy for mental health & suicide prevention
<b>EMPOWER</b>	Give everyone skills & confidence to intervene
<b>INCLUDE</b>	Emphasize sense of community & shared mission

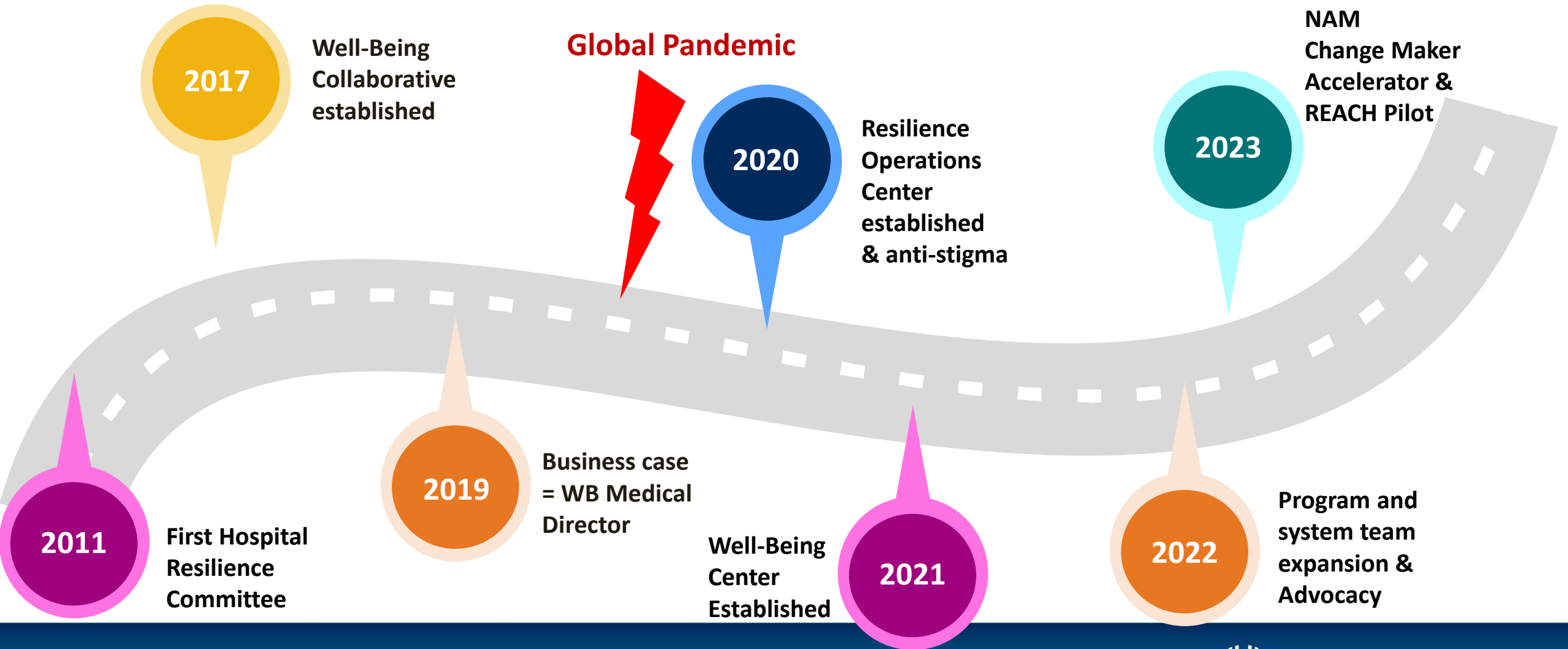
**Ultimately,  
this is about  
culture shift**



# The Approach to Culture Shift at OhioHealth

- Create a strategy to start the conversation
- Suicide Prevention as part of a larger body of work
- Tie into/build on existing De-Stigmatization Campaign
- Align with Quality and Patient Safety

# Our Well-Being Journey



# 2020

## System

- Anti-Stigma Committee Launched
- Toolkits for Leaders
- Hot Line Established

## GME

- For Your Success Proactive meetings move to onboarding – before orientation



# 2021

## System

- PSA
- Podcasts
- Video testimonials
- Education campaign
- Well-Being Center Consolidation and Growth

## GME

- Faculty and Resident guests
- Check In Appt standardized



# Well-Being Center Services

Highly **confidential** resource available to all OhioHealth associates and providers

To ensure **ease of access**, services are provided **in-person** at the Well-Being Center, **virtually/telephonically**, and on location at **individual care sites**

## *Services for All:*

**SAME DAY SUPPORT**

**1:1 COUNSELING & GROUP SUPPORT**

**WELLBEING @CARESITES**

**MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS**

**HEALING AND RENEWAL WEBINARS**

## *Additional Services for Providers\*:*

**EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONALISM**

**EVALUATION AND TREATMENT RECS**

**PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**WELL-BEING CONSULTS**

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING COACHING**



**OhioHealth**

# 2022

## System and GME

- Critical Incident Response
- Peer Support
- We Care Reflections

### **WE CARE SUPPORT PROGRAM**

Providing evidence-based immediate, short- and long-term emotional support to individuals and teams who experience distressing events in the workplace. Because **WE Care**.



**CARING FOR OUR CAREGIVERS**

# 2023

## System

- State level advocacy – State Licensing Boards and Ohio Department of Insurance
- Internal Safe Haven Policies
- System Suicide Prevention Event
- REACH© Pilot

## GME

- GMEC Well-Being Subcommittee
  - Data Driven
  - ACGME requirements



HOW ARE YOU?

## One question can save a life

There is a death by suicide every 11 minutes in the United States. **You do not need to be an expert to help.**

If you think someone is having thoughts of suicide, don't be afraid to ask them. Asking the question will not lead to suicide. **It can save their life.**

### HOW TO HELP

- + **Talk to them** — "People in situations like this may be thinking about suicide. Have you thought about killing yourself?"
- + Having this conversation can be difficult and uncomfortable. The OhioHealth Well-Being Center can provide you with emotional support and guidance. **Call Well-Being Connection at (614) 566-1800.**

### WHAT IF THEY HAVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS?

- + **Keep them safe** — do not leave them alone. If they go home, make sure they are going with someone who will keep them safe.
- + Remove any dangerous items from their physical location.
- + Get them immediate professional help by either:
  - Calling 911. If the person is currently a danger to themselves or others, the 911 operator will provide the steps to connect you to necessary emergency services.
  - Taking them to the closest emergency department.
  - Calling the OhioHealth Well-Being Connection at (614) 566-1800.

### HOW TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT GETTING SUPPORT

*See conversation guide on the next page*

- + "I care about you and want to connect you with support. I can help you find the right person to talk to."
- + "You are not alone. We can figure this out together."
- + "Who is a person you trust? I would like to call them so we can both support you together."

**As an OhioHealth associate or provider, you and your dependent family members have access to a variety of no-cost mental health services through the Well-Being Center.**

The Center provides support for individuals to overcome challenges, build resilience, and thrive personally and professionally.



### Important numbers

Emergency — Call 911.  
Say: "I am with someone in crisis."

Thoughts of Suicide — Call 988.  
(National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)

Support/Counseling — Call (614) 566-1800.  
(Well-Being Connection)

## One question can save a life

Start by asking "how are you?"

*If you are worried and need immediate help, call 911.*

"I am not fine."

"I am fine."

*But your gut says they're not.*

Thank them for sharing with you and acknowledge how hard that must be. "I'm so glad you told me. I know that must have been hard."

Explain why you're concerned. "You just don't seem like yourself lately." "I noticed you've been late for work and distracted. I'm concerned and want to check in with you."

Keep them safe — do not leave them alone or send them home from work without a personal support person, such as their emergency contact.

Offer support. "How can I help?" "What would feel most supportive to you right now?"

Listen without judgement and without offering solutions. Give associate your full attention. Put your phone away and shut your laptop if needed.

It may take a few check-ins before they feel comfortable talking to you.

"I care about you and want to connect you with support." (Then acknowledge the courage needed to talk with someone.) "I know it can be hard to reach out for help. If you'd like, I can be here with you to make the call."

Get them immediate professional help by calling 911.



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# 2024-Present

- Train the Trainers rollout
- Establishment of protocols for group requests
- Planning for booster shot

# OhioHealth REACH<sup>®</sup>

## Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training

Designed to help the OhioHealth community prevent suicide among their peers by teaching participants how to:

***Recognize Risk***

***Engage with Empathy***

***Ask about Suicide***

***Communicate Hope***

***Help Connect to Resources***

**60+**

***Training  
Sessions***

**700+**

***Gatekeepers  
Trained***



***Lives Saved***

OhioHealth is the ***first healthcare system  
in the country*** to offer peer suicide prevention training to their associates and providers



# REACH<sup>©</sup>

- 90 minute in-person training
- Created at Ohio State University in 2011
- Train the Trainer Model
  - Trainers are members of organization *at all levels*
- Licensed at 5 other universities
- More than 40,000 people trained, in small groups

# REACH<sup>®</sup> at OhioHealth

- Pilot trainings November, 2023
- 2024-Train the Trainer
  - 700+ associates & providers trained across 10 sites
- 2025-New Trainer implementation

- Recognize warning signs
- Engage with empathy
- Ask directly about suicide
- Communicate hope
- Help suicidal individuals access care

*Because Suicide Prevention  
is a Shared Responsibility*



Name  
has completed the  
**OhioHealth**  
**Suicide Prevention REACH® Training**  
and meets all the requirements  
to be a  
**Certified Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper**

Date

*Marie Hommema*  
Marie Hommema, MD, FAAFP  
Senior Medical Director Well-Being  
OhioHealth



*Darcy Haag Granello*  
Darcy Haag Granello, Ph.D., LPCC  
REACH® Founder  
Project Director  
OhioHealth Suicide Prevention Initiative

# Timeline of Gatekeeper Training

## Planning:

Sign Contract,  
Create Team,  
Develop Plan,  
Build Logistics

## Creating:

Develop &  
Refine  
Materials

## Implementing:

Pilot Stage of  
Gatekeeper  
Training

## Assessing:

Review Data to  
Inform Next  
Steps

## Expanding:

Train & Support  
New Trainers

## Moving Forward:

Expand  
Trainings,  
Collect & Use  
Data



# Findings

- Post-test (agree/strongly agree)
  - > 99% can recognize risk (47% at pre-test)
  - > 98% know how to ask (67% at pre-test)
  - > 98% know OhioHealth resources (52% at pre-test)
  - > 99% believe REACH<sup>©</sup> is relevant to their role



# Findings

- Post-test (agree/strongly agree)
  - > 98% feel competent
  - > 98% feel confident
  - > 98% are willing
- Multiple anecdotal reports
  - Used skills immediately
  - Sought assistance from OhioHealth Well-Being Center



## Findings

We know of  
6 lives saved  
directly due  
to REACH© trainings

# REACH Participant Comments:

- I feel empowered
- I think everyone should have REACH training. I will definitely use what I learned to help those I serve, my colleagues, and myself.
- I found this training very informative and impactful. I feel more equipped to help address this growing problem.
- I truly enjoyed the REACH training. It was very informative, made conversation about suicide a little easier to have and taught me things I can use not only in my professional life, but my personal life as well.
- Proud OhioHealth is investing in suicide awareness/prevention education/training. This training was very valuable!
- This training is a clear indicator of OhioHealth not only caring for patients but their employees and strong community connection.
- This training was worth every second. It should be required.
- This was so helpful and I feel confident I can help other people.



# Lessons Learned: Planning & Pilot Phase



Allow more time than you think is needed for contracting process



Engage & understand impact on staffing resources



If at multiple sites, have point person for each site



If not enough staffing resources, reduce number of sites



Do not underestimate need for emotional support



# Lessons Learned: Planning & Pilot Phase



Embed Suicide Prevention in larger context of mental health supports – this isn't the first step



Set up as part of existing learning system for registration, pre and post tests/evaluations



Identify key audiences at risk and communicate opportunity to them first



Utilize multiple communication strategies including formal communications teams & grass roots efforts



Use feedback and participant input to make continuous improvements



# Lessons Learned: Operations & Logistics



Create Collaboration Page for pilot/operationalization phase (Teams)



Create scheduling plan



Create operational checklist for trainings



# Lessons Learned: Train the Trainer



Make REACH completion a pre-requisite



Allocate resources for lunch during day of training



Ensure adequate resources are in place



Pair new trainers with "coach" for first few trainings & provide follow-up support & resources

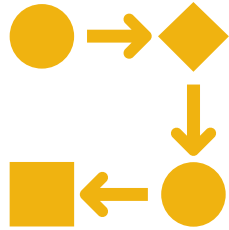


Make sure new trainers feel they are part of the overall mission

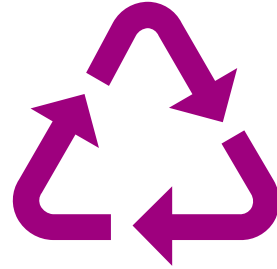
# Overall Advice



Plan for known distress amongst participants & normalize this



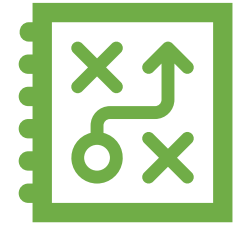
Stay flexible - Pivoting is part of the process



Process improvement is key



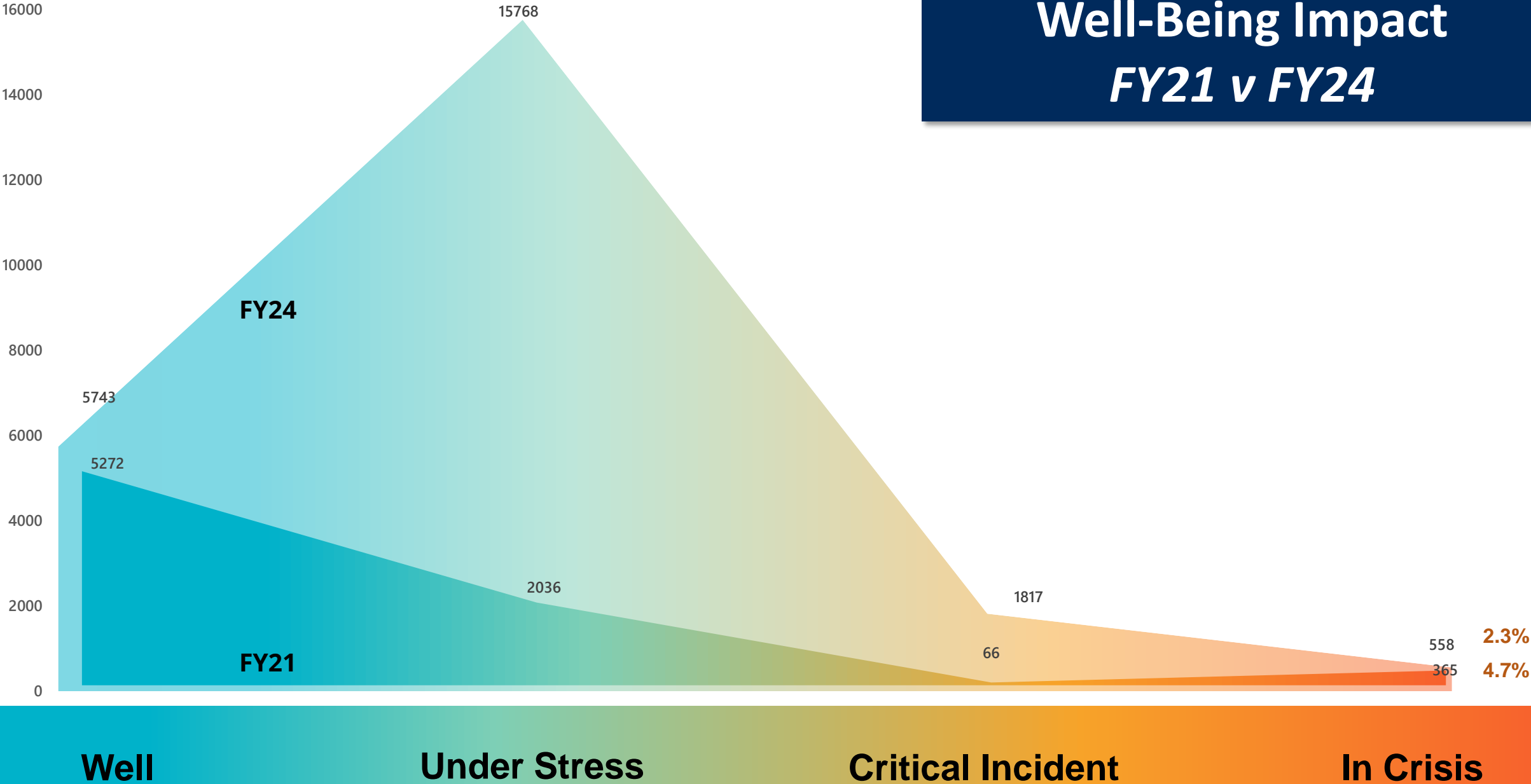
Clear communication and buy in with leadership



Setting expectations and creating opt outs

# Well-Being Impact

*FY21 v FY24*





# Overarching Goal

Systemic change that creates culture of care for suicide prevention and allows OhioHealth to develop a model for suicide prevention programming in healthcare settings for Ohio & nation



# Thank You!

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