



**MILKEN  
INSTITUTE**  
CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC HEALTH

FINAL RECAP

# Leidos CEO Pledge Collaborative Action Group

*Prepared by the Milken Institute Center for Public Health*

# PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

## Leidos 2017 CEO Pledge to End Addiction

Together employers have the power to influence and change policies and programs to help drive prevention efforts and address addiction and mental health challenges more broadly. While our collaboration begins with our own organizations' approaches to employee wellness, it also extends to those we serve in our communities every day.

[Read more about the pledge.](#)

Leidos and the Milken Institute Center for Public Health (CPH) partnered to address two significant crises in our country: the growing addiction epidemic and the mental health crisis that has deepened since the global COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic in March 2020. The Leidos CEO Collaborative Action Group was designed to catalyze the existing Leidos CEO Pledge to End Addiction. It was important to Leidos to follow up on the pledge. **Working within a specific timeline and scope, the three-part purpose of the Leidos CEO Collaborative Action Group was to:**

- 1) identify overlapping interests and expertise;
- 2) accelerate employers' development and promotion of workplace solutions to counter addiction; and
- 3) respond to—and anticipate—employees' needs with regard to broader mental health pressures such as anxiety, depression, and suicide.

This Collaborative Action Group final recap has two purposes. First, to highlight the value of mobilizing a pledge with clear actions that include partnerships and the commitment of employers to build their roles as key collaborators and stakeholders in whole-person health for their employees and communities. Second, to thank all the organizations that joined Leidos' Pledge and/or Action Group and worked with the Milken Institute behind the scenes. More than 85 organizations participated, representing an estimated 3 million employees.

# BACKGROUND

## Key Phases of Collaborative Action Work



### Phase I (May–July 2021)

**Purpose:** Identify employers interested in joining the Collaborative Action Group, whether or not they had signed the CEO Pledge. Understand employers’ unique interests, priorities, and any efforts already underway related to employee mental health and addiction.

**Steps taken:** Milken Institute CPH conducted outreach to 150 existing Pledge signatories and held more than 60 initial stakeholder meetings with additional organizations to introduce the Leidos CEO Pledge and explain the purpose of creating the Collaborative Action Group. It was designed with the recognition that employers are all part of a larger community and that addressing the addiction and mental-health crises requires a collaborative, unified response using a “whole person” approach that prioritizes physical and mental health equally.

### Phase II (August–November 2021)

**Purpose:** Identify and understand existing employer priorities, interests, and readiness to act. Launch the Collaborative Action Group and determine the focus areas and approach.

**Steps taken:** After initial intake meetings with all organizations in the Leidos Collaborative Action Group, Milken Institute CPH identified emerging themes of collective focus.

### Phase III (October 2021–December 2022)

**Purpose:** Identify where to accelerate action. Map and identify areas of shared interests, resources, expertise, policy action, and follow-through opportunities for each organization to have a larger impact on one of the priorities.

**Steps taken:** Milken Institute CPH worked to provide a trusting and open environment for listening and sharing lessons learned, which, combined with nimbleness at all levels of readiness to act, accelerated meaningful steps forward and change. Additionally, a willingness to work with nontraditional partners, sectors, and industries reduced silos and encouraged systems-level impact.

# RESULTS

## Commitment to Action: Engagement

In October 2021, after the kickoff meeting, CPH conducted a follow-up survey with a **93 percent response rate**. Key trends emerged, evolving into the Collaborative Action Group priorities that drove progress during and between meetings.

**Of the Collaborative Action Group members who responded to the October 2021 kickoff survey:**

- 22%** shared “We are **still working to define our actions** related to addiction and mental health”
- 8%** shared “We have **defined our action** but have not determined the next steps”
- 17%** shared “We have **taken initial steps** to put our priority action in place but lack information/ tools to create an implementation plan”
- 19%** shared “We have an implementation plan to put our action in place and are **following through**”
- 36%** shared “We have been implementing our plan and currently **measuring impact to evaluate next steps**”

### Collaborative Action Group Mental Health Priorities Identified through Mapping

- Awareness of science of substance use disorders (addiction)
- Barriers to addressing mental health
- Burnout
- COVID-19 effects
- Culture shift
- Employee assistance programs (EAPs)
- Substance use disorder and health technology
- Leadership
- Mental health
- Mental health and veterans
- Prevention
- Psychological safety
- Racial and health equity
- Stigma

Nearly **80%** committed to actions impacting organizational culture (i.e., psychological safety; stigma reduction; diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; racial equity; and leadership development).

Nearly **55%** committed to impacting employer health-care policies and programs (i.e., medical benefits, EAP, preventive care, health tech innovation).

Nearly **50%** committed to improving internal wellness and community policies and programs (i.e., philanthropy, employee training, employee resource groups).

# Commitment to Action: Stages

OCTOBER 2021-DECEMBER 2022

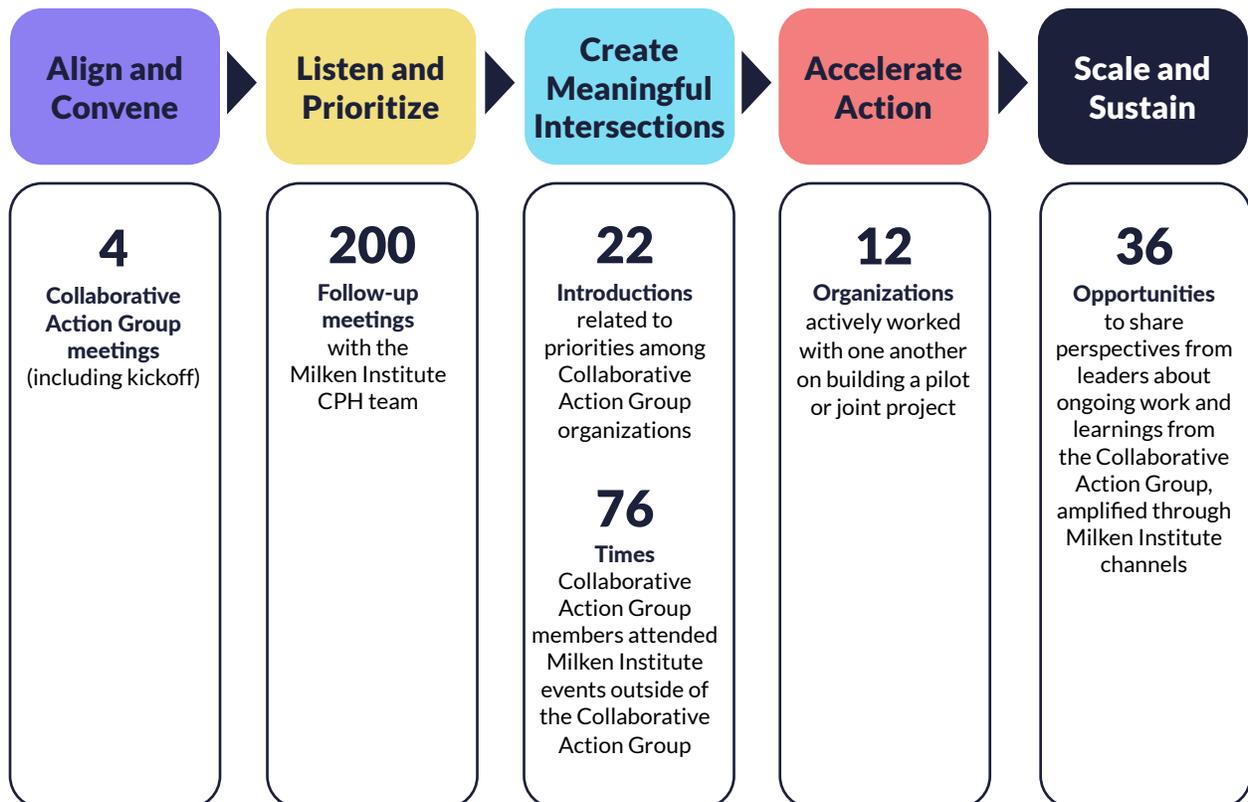
209 CEO Pledge signatories

39% increase in Pledge members since the start of the Collaborative Action Group

42% of Pledge signatories are Collaborative Action Group Members

88 Collaborative Action Group organizations and

12 additional organizations collaborating and contributing with an estimated reach of 3 million employees



# Commitment to Action: Highlights

The highlights below shine a light on examples within a Stage of Action (as outlined above) that members of the Collaborative Action Group led. In some cases, the content was created outside of the Collaborative Action Group, but the move to share, integrate, or amplify with other Collaborative Action Group members helped extend the reach of the step taken. In other examples, the action was original content or a unique effort stemming from the Collaborative Action Group.

## ALIGN AND CONVENE: STIGMA

To understand the long path of stigma even further, the Addiction Policy Forum shared its [Patient Journey Map](#) with employers in the Collaborative Action Group to help understand what the experience is like and how to navigate this health condition at work. The more organizations understand the entire patient journey, the more they can work toward removing stigma and building more inclusive policies, practices, and environments.

## ALIGN AND CONVENE: PREVENTION

The Drug Enforcement Administration's Washington Division Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget presented to the Collaborative Action Group on the current fentanyl poisoning crisis and local drug threats. Forget shared resources and information as part of a broader community-awareness effort and ongoing prevention work that includes Operation Prevention and the [One Pill Can Kill](#) campaign. Employers have a pivotal role to play from both public health and public safety perspectives by raising awareness among their employees and the surrounding community and helping to prevent drug addiction and overdoses.

## LISTEN AND PRIORITIZE: BARRIERS TO ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH/RESOURCES

Wisdo Health, the social health platform, is in discussion with other Collaborative Action Group organizations to intersect their work and leverage the platform Wisdo created. **In the fall of 2022, Wisdo Health invited all Action Group members** to avail themselves of its educational series. More than 200 key opinion leaders came together to identify the main challenges facing the mission to cure loneliness at scale.

## CREATE MEANINGFUL INTERSECTIONS: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND HEALTH TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORKPLACE

As a follow-up to a 2019–2020 health tech investment and innovation substance use disorder (SUD) project pilot that continued through 2020, the Milken Institute CPH is applying the insight to the workplace and identifying expertise to capture lessons learned, barriers to entry or success, and ways to embed evidence-based research and outcomes into digital health tools addressing SUD offered by employers. Based on the Collaborative Action Group's interest, several members are part of the next phase of this effort as it leads into 2023.

While **First Quadrant Advisory** (FQA) in Texas was on an internal journey to become a recovery-ready workplace, it connected with the already-successful **New Hampshire Recovery Friendly Workplace** to learn more about challenging stigma and providing support for employees in recovery and all those impacted by SUD. With the support of this cross-country collaboration, FQA also assists other Texas-based employers to become recovery-ready workplaces.

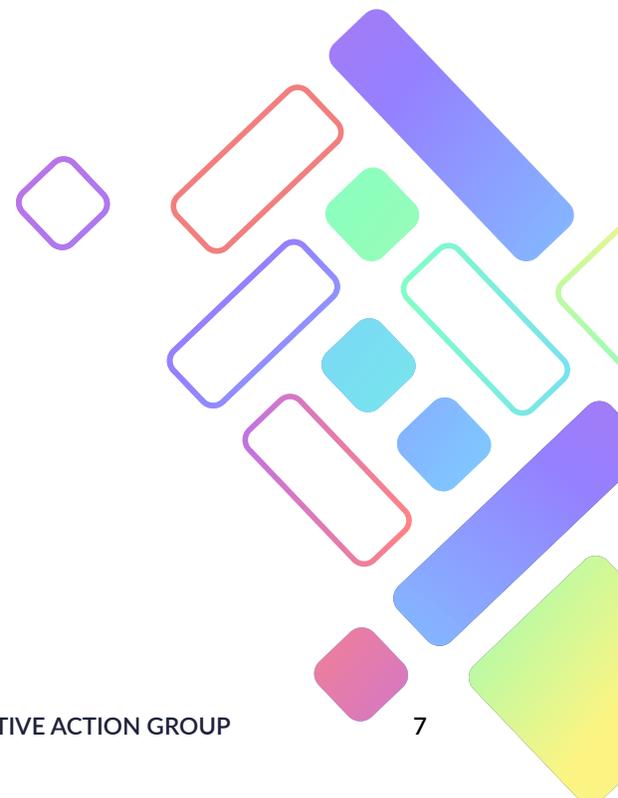
## CREATE MEANINGFUL INTERSECTIONS: STIGMA AND AWARENESS OF THE SCIENCE OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

The American Medical Association (AMA) published an issue brief, *The Nation's Drug Overdose Epidemic: Considerations for Employers*, which includes steps employers can take toward ending the epidemic. A key action step, according to an AMA representative during a Collaborative Action Group meeting, is to install an easily accessible naloxone rescue station in the workplace.

Opiant Pharmaceuticals shared with the broader Collaborative Action Group its organizational efforts focused on training executives and employees on the use and destigmatization of naloxone in the workplace community.

## ACCELERATE ACTION: RACIAL EQUITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Acknowledging racial equity's ties to employee safety and mental health, Milken Institute Center for Public Health explored insights, challenges, and progress gained from employers' racial equity responses. CPH conducted interviews with key leaders, a 50-employer environmental scan, a literature review, a survey, and a roundtable discussion that included speakers from RWJBarnabas Health (one of the largest employers in New Jersey), the Black Women's Health Imperative (BWHI), and the Cleveland Cavaliers. Follow-up included providing action steps to address racial inequity and mental health in the workplace. Several Collaborative Action Group members served as key discussants, and a number of others took part, including several from organizations representing a broader network of employers. CPH will publish additional insights from this work later this year.



The **BWHI Fair Work Index™** allows executive leaders to accurately measure workplace fairness, thus enhancing their strategy to create a fairer, healthier, and more equitable workplace.

**“Decades of research have established that experiencing racial discrimination results in chronic stress, which elevates cortisol levels (the stress hormone) and can lead to diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and other obesity-related syndromes. According to Black women, the workplace is one of the greatest sources of stress, making tackling workplace disparities an essential step toward achieving health equity.”**

*—Linda Goler Blount, President and CEO, Black Women’s Health Imperative*

## **SCALE AND SUSTAIN: LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE SHIFT**

Leidos’ leadership in this space began with the CEO Pledge to End Addiction and evolved into the company-wide **Mission for the Mind strategy**, aimed at improving mental health within Leidos’ workforce and the broader community. As Leidos’ internal efforts expanded, so did the desire to bring other organizations along to join them and learn from one another.

The formation of the **Collaborative Action Group** through the partnership with the Milken Institute brought together decision makers to share knowledge and experience to identify actionable steps and catalyze meaningful change. In doing so, Leidos has inspired change at other organizations and is helping create a cultural shift to a “whole person” approach that prioritizes physical and mental health equally. Leidos Chairman and CEO Roger Krone and his leadership team continue to champion their commitment and model their support. They are incorporating insight from Collaborative Action Group members into their own priorities.

After a change in organizational leadership, executives from Southwest Airlines publicly reiterated and solidified the company’s commitment to the Collaborative Action Group. Southwest collaborated with leaders from Leidos and other organizations to learn and understand best practices, employee benefits, and system-wide approaches to help guide them as they continue to advance their mental health and wellness strategy for employees and broader communities. The result was the creation of a long-term strategy for their employee mental health priorities.

# Commitment to Action: Leadership Testimonials

“By working together, we can be a catalyst for change. Working with our trusted partners across diverse industries and sectors, we have an opportunity to improve prevention, promote earlier diagnosis, and address stigma and access to mental healthcare.”

—Roger Krone, Chairman and CEO, Leidos. [Read the full statement.](#)

“At FQA, we signed the Leidos Pledge to End Addiction in support of the 40 million+ people in the US with SUD and their family members, including my late wife, Dr. Nisha Vijay. We are committed to improving the well-being of those with SUD and their loved ones in the workplace and beyond.”

—Vijay Murugappan, Founder and CEO, First Quadrant Advisory

“Southwest joins employers from across the country who recognize that we have a role to play in helping both our employees and the broader communities in which we live and work achieve better total well-being.”

—Bob Jordan, CEO, Southwest Airlines. [Read the full statement.](#)

“People need to feel safe talking about their lived experience of addiction and/or other mental illnesses because research shows that stigma is best reduced by facilitating contact between an affected group and others. When people feel they must hide their history of substance use or mental illness, it perpetuates the stigma.”

—Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health

## WHAT'S NEEDED TO DECREASE OVERDOSE RATES AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND RESOURCES:

“It's a focus and commitment to keep mental health and substance use disorder awareness, communication, and support part of a total health focus.”

—Doug Nemecek, Chief Medical Officer, Behavioral Health, Evernorth Health Services

“We have the ability to objectively measure pain and provide pain-data information. It’s important for employers to reduce their spending, reduce bias, and provide data on individual pain to help patients through that pain experience.”

—*Martha Lawrence, CEO and Co-Founder, AccendoWave*

“Employers can be an accountability piece. If we offer treatment and intervention in lieu of employment termination, that can be transformative.”

—*Jessica Hulsey, Founder and CEO, Addiction Policy Forum*

“We’ve encouraged our senior leadership to stand tall even when they need support ... We are not invincible, and it’s okay to say ‘I’m human and need help’ when they feel the same struggles. It’s okay to say it.”

—*Kevin Clayton, Senior Vice President, Head of Social Impact and Equity, Cleveland Cavaliers*

“Tone at the top is critical and necessary. This systems change effort is trickling down. Our employees see it. The only way we’re going to heal as organizations and as a country is when your story intersects with my story. We need to figure out where humanity still exists.”

—*DeAnna Minus-Vincent, Executive Vice President, Chief Social Justice & Accountability Officer, RWJBarnabas Health*

# Commitment to Action: Leadership Speaking Engagements

Research demonstrates the importance of leaders prioritizing mental health and SUD awareness to help destigmatize accessing prevention and treatment resources. Many Collaborative Action Group members have spoken publicly at Milken Institute events about the role of the employer in addressing mental health and SUD in the workplace.

## MILKEN INSTITUTE GLOBAL CONFERENCE 2020

### Building Mental Health Resilience Amidst Uncertainty

Roger Krone, Chairman and CEO, Leidos

## MILKEN INSTITUTE FUTURE OF HEALTH SUMMIT 2020 PANEL

### Innovation Born from Disruption: A Pandemic's Impact on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

Roger Krone, Chairman and CEO, Leidos

Robin McIntosh, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Workit Health

Nora Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health

## MILKEN INSTITUTE FUTURE HEALTH SUMMIT 2021 PANEL

### Addressing the Shadow Crisis: How Employers Are Putting Mental Health Front and Center

Kevin Clayton, Vice President of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement, Cleveland Cavaliers

Roger Krone, Chairman and CEO, Leidos

## MILKEN INSTITUTE PARTNERING FOR PATIENTS 2021 PANEL

### The Silent Patient at Work: How Employers Are Doing More for Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health

Keri Donaldson, Founder and CEO, Solvd Health

Boaz Gaon, Founder and CEO, Wisdo Social Health

Martha Lawrence, CEO and Co-Founder, AccendoWave

Jessica Hulsey Nickel, Founder and Executive Director, Addiction Policy Forum

Nora Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health

## MILKEN INSTITUTE GLOBAL CONFERENCE 2022

### **Mental Health in ESG: Increasing Employer Value and Impact**

Anthony Hassan, President and CEO, Cohen Veterans Network

Christopher Swift, Chairman and CEO, The Hartford

Nora Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health

## MILKEN INSTITUTE FUTURE OF HEALTH SUMMIT 2022 PANEL

### **Workplace Mental Health: C-suite Responding to the Now and Forecasting Investments for the Future**

Kiran Ahuja, Director, US Office of Personnel Management

Shari Conaway, Senior Director, People, Southwest Airlines

Roger Krone, Chairman and CEO, Leidos

DeAnna Minus-Vincent, Executive Vice President and Chief Social Justice and Accountability Officer, RWJBarnabas Health

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Milken Institute is grateful to Leidos for supporting the Institute's independent work on this project.



This recap is not exhaustive and is only meant to capture topline highlights of the 14 months-long project.

We are especially grateful to the Leidos Collaborative Action Group organizations for their commitment, engagement, willingness to share, and being open to making changes.

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# ABOUT US

## **About the Milken Institute**

The Milken Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank focused on accelerating measurable progress on the path to a meaningful life. With a focus on financial, physical, mental, and environmental health, we bring together the best ideas and innovative resourcing to develop blueprints for tackling some of our most critical global issues through the lens of what's pressing now and what's coming next.

## **About the Center for Public Health**

The Milken Institute Center for Public Health develops research, programs, and initiatives designed to envision and activate sustainable solutions leading to better health for individuals and communities worldwide.

## **About Leidos**

Leidos is a Fortune 500® technology, engineering, and science solutions and services leader working to solve the world's toughest challenges in the defense, intelligence, civil, and health markets. The company's 45,000 employees support vital missions for government and commercial customers. Headquartered in Reston, Virginia, Leidos reported annual revenues of approximately \$14.4 billion for the fiscal year ended December 30, 2022. For more information, visit [www.leidos.com](http://www.leidos.com).

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