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National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being Establishes Institute for Well-Being in Law

New nonprofit seeks to prioritize and improve well-being in the profession

(WASHINGTON, DC) The National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being has launched a new nonprofit dedicated to advancing systemic change in the legal profession so that well-being becomes a core component of personal and professional success.

This new organization – the Institute for Well-Being in Law (IWIL) – will advocate for systemic change in the legal profession to address a growing concern about mental health, substance use and addiction, and stress affecting lawyers. A June 2020 Association of Corporate Counsel [flash poll](#) showed that 75 percent of respondents were experiencing moderate to exceedingly high levels of burnout; half were experiencing sleep problems that bring on chronic fatigue; and almost a quarter disclosed an increased use of substances.

“The compounding crises of the past year have acted as an accelerant to the behavioral health problems that were already too prevalent in the legal profession,” said Bree Buchanan, president of IWIL. “The founders of IWIL believe there is no better time to launch this effort, which is focused on creating a culture change in how the profession prioritizes the well-being of its members.”

The issue of well-being in the law has gained significant traction since the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being released its groundbreaking report in 2017, [The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change](#). The report’s findings resulted in a national movement among stakeholders in the legal profession, including the judiciary, legal employers, regulators, law schools, malpractice carriers and lawyer assistance programs, and spurred the Task Force to establish IWIL in December 2020. Given the events of the past year—the COVID-19 pandemic, racial justice reckoning, and environmental disasters—and the resulting urgent need to both stem a second epidemic of mental health problems and improve the overall well-being of all members of the legal profession, IWIL’s formation comes at a critical time.

In addition, IWIL is coordinating [Well-Being Week In Law](#) from May 3-7 to raise awareness about mental health and encourage action and innovation across the profession to improve well-being.

“The enthusiastic embrace of Well-Being Week in Law in only its second year provides more evidence of the growth of the well-being movement, which should make us all optimistic that positive change is possible,” said Anne Brafford, IWIL vice president and founder and chair of Well-Being Week in Law.

Five firms are Inaugural Founding Champions of the IWIL: [Crowell & Moring LLP](#), [Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP](#), [Latham & Watkins LLP](#), [Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP](#) and [Reed Smith LLP](#). Representatives from each firm will serve on the IWIL’s 22-member Advisory Board and take active involvement in the organization. In addition to serving as founding members integral to IWIL’s formation and launch, the firms have each demonstrated their commitment to promoting well-being in law through considerable individual initiatives and programming.

“Katten is honored to be a founding champion of the Institute for Well-Being in Law, a key organization particularly now when it is perhaps more important than ever to attend to our emotional health and mental well-being and that of our colleagues,” said Katten Chairman Roger P. Furey. “This group is demonstrating that collaboration can help us address significant issues in our industry.”

Learn more at <http://lawyerwellbeing.net>.

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