

POLICY WATCH – January 2022

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Welcome to 2022! Most of us are starting this year off with some angst that we aren't where we hoped we would be when we looked ahead a year ago. In this issue, we look at how we are coping with the pandemic, especially mentally and emotionally, as we enter the third year of the pandemic's impacts. We think it is important to understand why we can feel stuck and languishing, and what we can do to maintain our belief that we will get through these challenges and be optimistic about the future. Don't miss the part about the Stockdale Paradox!

NBLC is proud to welcome Sonoma Valley Hospital as a new member. Our hearts go out to our local hospitals who are on the front lines of the pandemic, providing excellent care and working with labor constraints from so many healthcare workers being infected with COVID. We owe them a debt of gratitude for continuing to be there for us after so many months of being asked to work under extraordinary circumstances.

This issue also looks at why we are seeing labor shortages and what is contributing to the Great Resignation. One takeaway, low pay isn't the top motivator causing people to change jobs. Read the article to find out what research shows is driving people to make the change.

We wish you a happy new year – may you have good health, mentally and physically!

Best,



Cynthia

Welcome to 2022!

As we enter the third year of the pandemic, which started off with a huge surge from the Omicron variant, most if not all of us, are feeling the fatigue and stress from dealing with impacts and effects of a crisis going on far longer than we anticipated. And as we experience more people we know getting COVID, or dealing with exposures, or new restrictions, it is not surprising that it is taking a toll on our mental health as well as physical well-being.

One good piece of advice to improve our coping skills is in Chief Executive's [To Win In 2022, Remember The Stockdale Paradox](#) by Dan Bigman ([Link](#))

Bigman recommends that we embrace the Stockdale Paradox, which is a term “coined by author Jim Collins in his bestselling classic Good to Great. It stems from a life-changing conversation Collins had one afternoon with Admiral Jim Stockdale, the highest-ranking U.S. officer held prisoner during the Vietnam War.”

Bigman says, “Repeatedly tortured during nearly eight years in captivity, Stockdale survived it all, despite unimaginable hardships and no sense of when his privations would end. How, Collins wondered, did he do it? How did he find a way through?”

“As Collins recounts in the book, when he got a chance to ask Stockdale those questions, Stockdale told him that he ‘never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade.’”

“So, Collins asked, who didn’t make it out?” Bigman shares, ‘Oh, that’s easy,’ said Stockdale. ‘The optimists...Oh, they were the ones who said, ‘We’re going to be out by Christmas.’ And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they’d say, ‘We’re going to be out by Easter.’ And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart.’”

Bigman asks, “Sound familiar? In normal times, the uncanny optimism exhibited by so many business leaders I know is a tremendous benefit. It bucks them up, it lets them take the kinds of risks they need to build a successful business in the first place.”

He goes on to caution, “But in Covid times, I’ve come to see it can also be a dangerous blindspot. Not because it creates some kind of health risk or puts a company in economic jeopardy. But because, in a situation that has proven to be beyond anyone’s control, one that has exceeded the duration and imagination of nearly everyone except the most pessimistic among us, the continued belief that the end is just around each and every corner is a psychological bear trap—not just for them, but for their teams.”

Bigman says, “Is Omicron—as at least one eternal optimist I spent time with over the holiday told me repeatedly—the last gasp of Covid? Maybe. Is it not as bad as many first feared? Maybe. Is the media making too big a deal of it? Maybe. Is it just ‘Omicron’ as one company president with a large operation in Europe told me definitively? Again, maybe.”

“The brutal fact, as Collins might put it, is this: We don’t know. No one knows,” says Bigman. “It’s out of our control. It always has been. But Covid itself isn’t what’s getting to so many of us—it’s the continued trashing of our best hopes for escape by Easter, by summer, by Christmas. Expectation and disappointment taxing our staffs, taxing us. I see it in our company, you see it in yours.”

Bigman recommends, “As we head into our third year of Covid, perhaps it’s time to get the team together and embrace a new way of thinking: We don’t know what will happen next, or how long this will last, and it doesn’t matter. We will get through it, step by step, day by day, by coming together and dealing with what’s in front of us, in the same way Stockdale did, under much worse circumstances than anything we’re facing today.”

“This is a very important lesson,” Stockdale tells Collins. “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

Let’s see if this wise advice helps make it a better year. For more understanding of what we are up against check out [How Year 3 Of Covid-19 Will Mess With Our Minds](#) by Robert Pearl, ([Link](#)) Here we learn we are going to need help coping this year. Pearl says, “As Americans embark on year three of Covid-19, there’s mounting evidence to suggest that most of us are struggling with the pandemic more than we might think. Polling paints a fuzzy picture of the American psyche after nearly two years of pandemic stress. On one hand, people are going about their lives despite the looming threat of the Omicron variant. On the other hand, 41% of adults say they’ve experienced symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder more than half the days of the week, a significant increase from 11% in 2019.”

Pearl says, “Most likely, people’s frustrations and anxieties are far worse than self-reported surveys indicate. It’s one thing to say or even think we’re feeling fine—as if two years of seesawing social restrictions could simply be taken in stride—but how we feel on the inside is something else entirely. Our mood is a complicated mixture of biochemistry, psychology and environment.”

“That last factor, environment, has influenced our lives greatly throughout the pandemic,” says Pearl. “Twenty-four months after the first U.S. case of Covid-19 was reported, we still have to wear masks at airports, in some public arenas and whenever cases spike. Our news feeds continue to overflow with dire warnings about new variants, breakthrough cases and misinformation campaigns. Meanwhile, almost every activity—from birthdays and anniversaries to grocery shopping and television watching—comes with the joy-sapping reminder that we are still smack dab in the middle of a public-health crisis and that almost nothing is as it was before. If you have any doubt that our environment weighs heavy on our mood, consider how much Covid-19 has changed the ways we work, communicate, celebrate, educate our children, spend our money and even sleep.”

Pearl says, “Sometimes, our brains and bodies fail to give us early and sufficient warning when things are off. As an example, high blood pressure is one of the leading causes of heart attack and stroke, yet people with hypertension can go years without experiencing signs or symptoms, even when their blood-pressure readings are dangerously high. Anxiety works much the same way. We can dismiss or not even notice distressing symptoms: trouble sleeping, loss of energy, overeating or relationship issues. But what starts as an annoyance can escalate over time and become an internal crisis.”

An important point is the need to grieve. Pearl says, “Take disenfranchised grief, a kind of mourning that isn’t routinely acknowledged because it doesn’t stack up to the type of trauma others have undergone. Comparing ourselves to others—say, those who’ve lost a loved one to the virus—leads us to perceive our own difficulties as trivial. The reality is that all Americans have endured restrictions, experienced frustrations and missed out on milestone events like weddings and graduations. None of these alone feel as painful as a death, but together they erode our sense of well-being. They need to be acknowledged and grieved. Psychologists say that doing so is a cathartic and healthy way of coping. Failing to do so, however, can create long-lasting psychological scars.”

“In the early days of the pandemic, during lockdowns and school closures, much was made of the effects that social isolation had on people,” says Pearl. “Researchers quickly observed upticks in substance abuse, domestic violence and suicidal ideation. Those threats haven’t disappeared, they’ve just become the ‘new normal’ and no longer seem newsworthy. That’s a dangerous societal oversight. Two years of

disappointment, frustration and loneliness have produced an odd combination of boredom, malaise and dread. Psychologists call this languishing, a disturbing sense of stagnation and emptiness.”

Pearl says, “The past year, especially, has featured the bizarre and unsettling sensation of being stuck: 2021 began with fears and uncertainty over the Delta variant and ended with fears and uncertainty over Omicron. It started with President Biden calling for all Americans to get vaccinated and ended the same way—with those calls going unheeded by roughly 30-40% of the U.S. population. The coming year brings with it the impending threats of business lockdowns, school closings, event cancellations and travel restrictions; the same way 2021 began.”

Invoking the Stockdale paradox, Pearl says, “Every time we think the finish line is in sight, a new viral threat or sudden surge of cases comes along, dashing our optimism and ushering in fresh waves of anxiety, frustration and fear. If 2022 were to end in a similar fashion as 2021, we’ll have lived under siege for more than 1,000 days. And the impact of an additional year would be even worse when it comes to our mental state and well-being.”

Pearl says, “Untold amounts of money, energy and scientific resource have been hurled at the virus in hopes of mitigating the obvious medical threat.” More vaccination sites, testing, masks, public education, research on treatments and new vaccines, National Guard helping fill in at hospitals and schools, and more. But Pearl says we are missing the mark on the “need to address the mental- and behavioral-health risks of a prolonged pandemic. Nowhere in Biden’s plan is there a guarantee that health insurance will fully cover treatment for mood disorders or ensure that out-of-pocket costs won’t limit access to counseling. Nor is there any mention of requiring a paid time-off benefits for workers who experience psychological difficulties or require professional help.”

Pearl says, “Someday, our nation will put this terrible disease behind us. But if we continue to ignore our psychological problems in the third and (possibly) fourth or fifth years of Covid-19, then our nation’s health problems won’t end when the pandemic does. For those whose anxiety has become unmanageable, now is the time to get professional help. But even for those of us who think we’re coping well, let’s make 2022 the year we address our growing anxieties and daily frustrations.” Wise advice – let’s hope we have enough capacity to meet the needs of those who seek help.

North Bay Leadership Council Welcomes Sonoma Valley Hospital as a Member

North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) is pleased to announce that Sonoma Valley Hospital is a new member of the organization. Sonoma Valley Hospital (SVH) is a full-service acute care district hospital located in the city of Sonoma, providing compassionate expert care to the 42,000 residents of the Sonoma Valley Health Care District. The Hospital has 24 acute care beds and maintains a 27-bed Skilled Nursing Facility. SVH is the sole provider of acute inpatient care in the Sonoma Valley and offers a 24-hour emergency room, inpatient services with an ICU, surgical services and outpatient clinical testing and treatment. In 2018, the Hospital announced an affiliation with UCSF Health to better serve the community.

NBLC’s Board Chair, Patty Garbarino, who is President of Marin Sanitary Services, said “NBLC is proud to have Sonoma Valley Hospital join us in our work to advocate for employers like them to support the healthcare system in the North Bay, and seek more workforce housing, better transportation, improved education and training of the workforce, and adapting to the impacts of climate change to lessen the fires, drought and storms that are wreaking havoc in our region.”

In recent years, SVH has undergone extensive renovation including completing seismic structural upgrades and opening a new wing with a modern Emergency Department and Surgery Center. In 2020, the Hospital opened the first phase of a new Outpatient Diagnostic Center which, when completed, will contain a state-of-the-art CT scanner and MRI. The Hospital is fully accredited by the Center for Improvement in Healthcare Quality (CIHQ), meeting national standards for healthcare quality and safety.

John Hennelly, president and CEO of SVH will be the NBLC member representative. Hennelly said, “The pandemic has underscored how important a robust healthcare system is to the North Bay. We are looking forward to working with other members of NBLC to ensure the high quality of our healthcare providers is maintained and supported as we continue through and beyond these challenging times. We are strong proponents of collaboration and appreciate that the members of NBLC are, too.”

In November, the voters approved a renewal of the district’s parcel tax measure, a great accomplishment in Hennelly’s first year. Prior to leading SVH, he served as CEO of St. Louise Regional Hospital in Gilroy, where he led a financial and operational turnaround, overseeing the 93-bed hospital’s 2019 sale to Santa Clara County. His prior experience includes executive positions at hospitals in Chicago, including at Presence Health, an 11-hospital system, and Saint Anthony Hospital. Hennelly holds a BA from American University in Washington, DC, and an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He is fluent in Spanish.

SVH works closely with many healthcare providers to provide patients with a seamless continuum of care. They are affiliated with UCSF Health, the top-rated medical center in California and one of the top five hospitals in the nation according to U. S. News & World Report. This affiliation strives to improve healthcare for Sonoma Valley residents by combining the specialized expertise and resources of UCSF Health with the community care focus of SVH.

They also maintain service agreements with other hospitals and healthcare providers in the region including MarinHealth Medical Network, Meritage Medical Network, MarinHealth Medical Center, St Joseph’s Heath, California Pacific Medical Center, and Sonoma Valley Community Health Center.

State of Housing in Sonoma County Report from Generation Housing

NBLC supports Generation Housing’s efforts to build much needed in Sonoma County and appreciates this report’s collection and analysis of data needed to spur action to achieve the goal of 58,000 new units by 2030. We are sharing the forward to the new State of Housing in Sonoma County report just released. We encourage you to download the full report at: https://generationhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2022_SOHSC_Final.pdf

State of Housing in Sonoma County

Forward

The 2017 wildfires and subsequent fires, flood, and the pandemic laid bare that the state of our Sonoma County’s housing resources is inextricably linked with the strength our community’s resilience. Leaders across all sectors cite the lack of affordable housing as our community’s most pressing problem, our health care systems’ community needs assessments identified “housing and homelessness” as the top concern,

and our local business leaders cite housing as the tallest hurdle to hiring employees, from entry-level to specialty professional, to executive leadership.

Generation Housing's 2021 report "How Much Housing Do We Need" determined that Sonoma County is 38,000 units behind right now and will need 20,000 more by 2030, setting the housing production goal for this decade at a whopping 58,000 units. The follow-up "Roadmap to 58K, pt. 1" ([Link](#)) made the audacious claim that 58,000 is doable and outlined the changes necessary to sufficiently ramp up housing production.

But making this kind of headway requires that we, as a community, match our level of concern with a commitment to action and investment in solutions. Solving our housing dilemmas has positive ripple effects. The availability of safe, stable, and affordable housing for our community members is a critical driver for individual economic opportunity, better educational performance, and improved health outcomes. The future economic vitality and resilience of our county is jeopardized if young workers, students, and families cannot stay or cannot live in a healthy way because of housing cost burden.

Investment in housing production is a powerful economic engine and job creator. And well-planned affordable housing is a boon for the environment — decreasing our carbon footprint and preserving our open space.

Embarking on solutions requires knowing where we are starting and being able to measure our progress. And so, we offer this State of Housing in Sonoma County, 2022, which we aim to be the first annual report. We hope it will be a valuable resource to our community leadership, and one day, we hope it will be a document that helps show how far we've come.

As much data as the report provides, it also begs some questions, such as: How do we compare to other localities? What are the trends of homeownership and how was it impacted by the pandemic? What is the impact of so many aging homes? How can we quickly address the rising rates of overcrowding? Ones that are especially compelling to us: What pro-housing policies can address our housing scarcity and affordability challenges in a way that also reduce housing related disparities, begin to desegregate, and guard against gentrification-driven displacement? And what are the specific kinds and degrees of impact of housing cost burden?

We'll be launching this comprehensive research project in the next month to help inform local funding, policy, and programmatic decisions. We hope you'll join our efforts to get more, more diverse, and more affordable housing built.

Great Resignation is a Wake-Up Call for Employers

Employers across the board in the North Bay are having trouble hiring and retaining employees. Many reasons are given from the lack of workforce housing, to long commutes, to low pay and few benefits. In [The Great Resignation Wake-up Call -- What it Teaches About Keeping Valuable Talent](#) by Donna Hamlin, PhD, (who leads the CHROs2GO practice in the 2GO Advisory Group), she lays out why employees are leaving and how to stem that tide. Important note, higher pay isn't the biggest motivator to changing jobs.

Why Employees Leave an Organization

Here's Hamlin's key reasons employees become vulnerable to leave.

1. **They rethink their life and purpose.** While this is typically unique to a specific person, Covid created major upheaval, causing many to reconsider what the heck they are doing. Such threats create existential moments when people reframe who they are and what they want and should be doing. People had time alone to reflect on their lives, what is meaningful and how to discover hope with new choices and experiences. Pivots and changes are understandable ways to reinvent ourselves.
2. **They feel the organization's mission and purpose has become muddy, lost or unclear.** As a result, they don't feel they are doing work that is important anymore. If they identify with the goal or the organization, and believe their colleagues have the same high standards about how to achieve it – they develop deep, long-term commitments to reaching the goals.
3. **Their role is unclear.** Employees want to know their responsibilities, the expectations which are set for them and how they are doing. If communication about this is not both clear and candid, they become frustrated.
4. **They do not believe their voice counts.** If a work culture is biased and only certain people's ideas or opinions matter, employees decide to find where they will be valued more.
5. **The company cannot or does not provide the tools and resources to do the job right.** Trying to do work without the resources becomes "mission impossible" and employees don't like to have their reputations sullied by projects that are doomed to under-deliver.
6. **They do not get recognized for jobs well done, personal contributions made or willingness to help above and beyond the call of duty.** Psychologically, people like their work when they know – and are recognized – for making a difference. People come to work with four "unconscious doubts" they aim to resolve: Am I competent? Am I significant? Am I likable? Can I cope? Recognition calms the doubts, which increases jobs well done!
7. **The organization does not pay attention to their personal development and goals to grow professionally.** If an organization does not offer formal or informal chances for employees to develop new skills and have new experiences, work can become stale. A balance of old and new keeps people engaged. Managers who check-in on people and coach them let them know they are valued.
8. **They don't like their boss.** Employees who respect and value a good manager will stay loyal and committed. If they disrespect the boss, they move out and on.
9. **They don't have a chance to shine.** Employees generally want to be proud of their work. If they don't have the chance to do work about which they are proud, they will find another way to show they can do great work.
10. **They don't like the people.** People look for friends and mates with whom they enjoy working. Creating ways to build strong relationships among staff members is key. If people like their colleagues, they have more engagement and stamina. This helps any organization make it through thick and thin. Managers need to build time in for team-building, celebration of success, social networking and recognition for who does extraordinarily well on a special task. Creating diversity with a robust mix of employees increases the chances people find fellowship. A little fun time helps, too.

11. **They aren't paid enough.** This is actually the least critical of the reasons I hear. Many employees can be enticed by higher salaries outside. Yet, the reason they start looking is because of the first ten issues cited. Salary is compelling, but many employees can be talked out of making a leap if they are assured the dissatisfiers are resolved. Employees want to know they are paid fairly and competitively. Throwing more money at them instead of resolving what is really bugging them only let's you "rent" them for a little longer. While companies today are increasing compensation to recruit new talent and cover their churn, it is best not to count on it for true retention.

Hamlin says, "Perhaps the silver lining from the Great Resignation is that it causes us to evaluate what we can do in the future to improve. A first step is to assess how well your company addresses the issues noted above."

"Many of the factors are psychological," says Hamlin. "It reminds me of futurist Edie Weiner's forecast that *"Companies will not hire employees. They will hire minds. HR professionals will become the most important executives in companies."* It strikes me as the right time to invest more in personal counseling, mentoring, coaching and professional development. Training managers more in psychology to improve their mentoring and coaching can help. Adding talent to the HR team with training in individual counselling who can enrich the programs for OD and career development can enrich outcomes."

Hamlin concludes, "Managers will find they can count on a reliable team for the long term when they conscientiously work on fundamentals that keep people motivated, excited to learn and grow and feel valued and among friends will find they can count on a reliable team for the long-term."

NBLC Member Anniversaries

Thank you to the for being NBLC members all these years!

Skywalker Properties ~ 32-year anniversary

Dominican University ~ 30-year anniversary

Sutter Health ~ 29-year anniversary

North Bay Business Journal ~ 28-year anniversary

Bank of America ~ 26-year anniversary

Side by Side ~ 16-year anniversary

Marin Sanitary Service ~ 15-year anniversary

Woodruff-Sawyer & Co. ~ 11-year anniversary

Bay Alarm. ~ 3-year anniversary

SPARC ~ 1-year anniversary

The LIME Foundation ~ 1-year anniversary

Members in the News

Dominican University of California Has Received a National Award for “Institutional Transformation”

Dominican University of California has received a national award for “institutional transformation” in recognition of the university’s work creating partnerships that deepen student civic learning and strengthen local communities.

Dominican University Postpones the Inauguration of Nicola Pitchford

Dominican University of California has made the decision to postpone the presidential inauguration events scheduled for January 16-17.

Basin Street Properties’ Santa Rosa Oak Valley Business Center Attracts to Move There Magnolia Bank

Basin Street Properties, a prominent northern Nevada and northern California real estate investment, development, and management firm, is pleased to announce Magnolia Bank has signed a lease for 3,665 square feet at Oak Valley Business Center in Santa Rosa, California.

Redwood Credit Union Receives ENERGY STAR Certification for its Santa Rosa Administrative Office

Redwood Credit Union (RCU) has earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) ENERGY STAR certification for commercial buildings for its administrative office at 3033 Cleveland Avenue in Santa Rosa, California.

Burbank Housing Featured as Part of the Chan Zuckerberg Housing Initiative

Burbank Housing is the North Bay’s leading affordable housing nonprofit.

Friedman’s, a Petaluma Landmark, Celebrates 75 years

In March of 1946, Santa Rosa residents Joe and Benny Friedman handed over their savings – \$4,000 – to buy the contents of Meyer Lerer’s Petaluma junkyard and renting the property at 17 East Washington St., on the river and near the corner of what was then known as Main Street.

North Bay Children’s Center’s Fitch Mountain Preschool Unveils New Outdoor Classroom, Play Space

Preschool children helped Healdsburg Unified School District (HUSD) Chris Vanden Heuvel cut a white ribbon for the unveiling of the newly renovated outdoor classroom and play area at the North Bay Children’s Center (NBCC) Fitch Mountain Preschool.



Who We Are

Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org
www.northbayleadership.org