



## COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- We will be providing coalition members with updates pertaining to the COVID-19 outbreak and mental health resources
- I have included some examples of social graphics the City of New York is utilizing to provide guidance to our residents on COVID-19
- **COVID-19 Mental Health Specific Resources:**
  - *World Health Organization (WHO):*
    - [Mental Health Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
  - *Centers for Disease Control (CDC):*
    - [Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)
  - *American Counseling Center:*
    - [COVID-19 Related Resources](#)
  - *City of New York Department of Health:*
    - [Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)
- **News Articles:**
  - [CNBC](#): WHO Gives Advice on Handling Mental Health Tool Caused by Coronavirus
  - [Washington Post](#): What Coronavirus Fear Are Doing to People with Anxiety Disorders
  - [Psychology Today](#): How Covid19 May Impact Mental Health
  - [NBC](#): Coronavirus Lockdowns Lead to Rise in Mental Health Issues
  - [Mother Jones](#): Mental Health Professional Are Preparing for An Epidemic of Anxiety Around the Coronavirus

## CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE NEWS

**DAKOTA COUNTY, MN: Pilot Program Helps 911 Callers with Mental Health Concerns:** Dakota County, Minn., is continuing a pilot program that helps callers who consistently dial 911 in connection with mental health concerns by coordinating the response of police officers and social workers. The initiative, which began a year ago in January and ran through the end of 2019, aims to coordinate the response of law enforcement officers and county social workers when emotionally distressed residents call police. Officials had hoped they would receive fewer mental health-related calls. Preliminary data show that police logged more calls, at least in the short term, due to repeat calls from struggling people who had developed a rapport with responders. Nevertheless, county and city officials deem the program a success. Many who at first saw reducing 911 calls

as the goal now believe that "what's most important is that we have an effective response and that we're meeting people where the needs are. For the pilot program, South St. Paul and West St. Paul each dedicated an officer to the program, and the county funded a social worker at a cost of \$80,000 to \$90,000 to split time between the two departments. A social worker and police officer visited the homes of 619 callers last year in West St. Paul or South St. Paul right after they got a report of a psychological emergency. They introduced themselves, checked on the person's well-being and offered resources ranging from food shelves to therapists. They also found out whether the person was already getting county assistance. The outreach process begins when Bassett or the assigned police officers — Jesse Meitner in West St. Paul or Derek Kruse in South St. Paul — receives a report about a mental health-related 911 call. Bassett checks the database to see if the person is connected to county services, something police can't do because of privacy laws. Then she and the officer visit their home, asking what kind of support they need or finding ways to boost the care they're getting already. The program also ensures that emergency dispatch staffers answering phones after hours have information about frequent callers and a plan for their crises. Each month, officials with the county, both cities and several organizations meet to discuss trends and brainstorm ways to help certain people

**PIERCE COUNTY, WA: *Vote on Pierce County behavioral health delayed indefinitely:*** After two hours of nonprofits, school districts, hospitals, police departments, elected officials and residents speaking to the need for behavioral health funding, the Pierce County Council decided Tuesday to indefinitely postpone voting on implementing a tax to raise such money. The tax proposal would increase the county sales tax by one-tenth of 1 percent, or a penny on every ten-dollar purchase. The county estimates the tax would have collected about \$13.1 million in 2020 to address gaps in mental health and substance abuse care. The one-tenth of one percent on sales tax is estimated to cost every resident in Pierce County outside of Tacoma \$19.35 annually. The money collected would help existing health care providers and nonprofits cover the existing gaps in mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities. The funds would help cover costs incurred by therapeutic and drug courts, crisis recovery centers and to provide more beds for those in crisis. Of Washington's 39 counties, 24 have passed this tax. Pierce County is the sole county in Western Washington to not have the tax. Tacoma was allowed permission by the state to pass the tax after the county failed to. The resolution to delay also requested a county subcommittee to deliver a strategic framework before Oct. 1 of how the \$13.1 million would be spent.

**ALABAMA: *Mental health bills advance in Alabama Legislature:*** This week, the House Judiciary Committee approved House Bill 340, which would allow hospitals and law enforcement to put people in protective custody for 72 hours if they're thought to be a risk to themselves or others. People will be transported to a hospital or other designated treatment facility for an evaluation and treatment. In addition, Legislation from Rep. Rex Reynolds, R-Huntsville, and Sen. Andrew Jones, R-Centre, would require at least 16 hours of crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers and House Bill 326 and Senate Bill 82 both cleared committees last week.

**COLORADO: *Lawmakers are pushing for a transportation system dedicated to getting people in crisis to care:*** A new bill in front of Colorado lawmakers seeks to setup a separate transportation system for those in the throes of a mental health crisis. Proponents say the new system would be better tailored to mental health needs and could save money in the long run. The new system is primarily intended to help transport people placed on 72-hour involuntary holds because they are considered to be a danger to themselves or others. It could also be used to transport people between levels of behavioral health care. County commissioners would license private companies for transport, and Medicaid would cover the cost. According to the most recent available data, between 2012 and 2016, the number of people placed on crisis holds in Colorado rose by more than 39% — or from about 28,000 to more than 39,000. A state analysis found that about 6% of Medicaid recipients using emergency medical services or a mental health treatment facility will need the new transportation service. That equates to about 972 Medicaid-covered trips per year at a total cost of \$215,784.

A small-scale version of secure transport has been underway since 2018. The Colorado Office of Behavioral Health paid for transport services for people on 72-hour holds to the San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group and the Center for Mental Health in Montrose. Jennifer Silva, chief clinical officer for the San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group, said the service has been invaluable, allowing the center to transport 10 to 15 people per month in a more appropriate way. The bill is projected to cost \$1.2 million between 2020 and 2022. That estimate includes about \$500,000 in federal funds. The costs include updates to Medicaid systems and contracts with companies who provide the service. The legislation requires the Colorado Department of Human Services to work with the state Commissioner of Insurance to expand private health plans to include coverage for secure transportation.

**ILLINOIS: *Legislators Mull Creation of Behavioral Health Workforce Center:*** A new report recently delivered to state lawmakers that says Illinois' behavioral health workforce has lurched from "emergency" to "crisis" and calls on the legislature to establish a permanent "workforce education center" to address an acute shortage of workers, especially in rural areas of the state, that was the subject of Senate and House hearings on March 3 and 5. The task force, whose members include representatives from the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University, Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and the Illinois Department of Human Service – Division of Mental Health, envisions that the permanent workforce center would be a collaborative leadership effort. State Senator Heather Steans (D-Chicago) is sponsoring the legislation, SB 3501, to create the center. In the 55-page report, the 12-member panel, steered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, pointed to a Kaiser Family Foundation estimate showing that only 23.3% of Illinoisans' mental health needs can be met with its current workforce with wait times for psychiatrist appointments, for example, stretching to 4 to 6 months in some cases. Moreover, in rural Illinois, 93.7% of low-income and under-insured individuals and families live in designated mental health shortage areas.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE: *Statewide mental health program being developed:*** State officials and members of the medical community are collaborating to develop a comprehensive statewide program to serve people with serious mental health challenges. Ken Norton, executive director of NAMI-NH, said his hope for the program is a statewide system in place to provide the best and most uniform treatment for mental illness available. The plan calls for 14 treatment centers around the state, based on a model similar to the Hub and Spoke approach the state is taking with the substance abuse issues in New Hampshire. A kickoff event was held in September of last year to bring together stakeholders. The program will be available for all, but the target age group is young people 15 to 35, the age when mental illness first tends to manifest, although it can be earlier or later. They plan a big focus on schools, colleges and universities. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center will be the coordinating facility, with NAMI as a sub-contractor.

**OHIO: *New Ohio program would expand mental-health treatment for rural students through virtual visits:*** A new pilot program will offer tele-health counseling to students at Switzerland school district. Geographically, Switzerland of Ohio is the largest school district in Ohio, covering 546 square miles in Monroe County, and parts of nearby Belmont and Noble counties. The district only has two contracted counselors and eight buildings, and the schools there are as much as 45 minutes apart in an area of the state with poor cell phone service. It also struggles to find qualified people willing to take counseling jobs. Officials hope the new program will make mental-health treatment more available to students in an area of the state where access is limited. If it works, they plan to try to expand it elsewhere. The program will be built off of a state broadband network that provides high-speed Internet connections to the school's buildings. A planned second phase of the program would potentially extend that network, connecting it to other community mental-health providers sometime next year. That could bring broadband access to other residents in the area, a goal of a different state initiative that aims to expand broadband access in underserved areas. The program will cost \$1 million, paid for through federal Medicaid revenues and existing state funding.

## **EXECUTIVE**

### **President Trump Declares the Coronavirus Outbreak a National Emergency**

- This will allow the federal government to quickly free up \$50 billion in federal aid for local municipalities and states to use to combat the illness
- The order would allow Health and Human Services to waive certain regulations and laws to more quickly deliver testing and care for coronavirus patients

## **SENATE**

### **The Senate passed the following legislation:**

- H.R.4920 - Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020
- H.R. 4194, the "National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2019
- H.R.6172 - USA FREEDOM Reauthorization Act of 2020

## **HOUSE**

### **Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Marked Up 988 Suicide Hotline Bill**

- The Subcommittee on Communications and Technology of the Committee on Energy and Commerce met in open markup session on Tuesday
- H.R. 4194, the “National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2019”, (Reps. Stewart (R-UT) and Moulton (D-MA), was forwarded favorably to the full Committee for a vote

### **The House passed the following legislation:**

- H.R.1771 - Divided Families Reunification Act
- H.R.2444 - Eastern European Security Act
- H.R.2877 - To add Ireland to the E-3 nonimmigrant visa program
- H.R.3598 - FREED Vets Act
- H.R.6020 - To require an evaluation by the Government Accountability Office of the social, economic, and historic contributions that Minor League Baseball has made to American life and culture
- S.760 - Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019
- H.R.6172 - USA FREEDOM Reauthorization Act of 2020

## **IN OTHER NEWS**

### **New Study Shows 8% of Youth Think About Suicide**

- A new study of nearly 8,000 children across the U.S. concludes that about 8 in every 100 kids who are 9 or 10 years old think about suicide or act on those ideas
- Their caregivers were aware of fewer suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts — 107 attempts reported by kids versus 39 by adults — raising alarm that such distress might be overlooked

- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death in children 10 to 14 years old, and over the last 10 years, emergency visits and hospital stays for children who thought about or tried to die by suicide have doubled. The strongest risk factors are kids' psychological problems and family conflict

### **New CDC Survey Shows Less Than Half of Patients Asked About Binge Drinking**

- A recent [CDC survey](#) revealed that although more than three-quarters of patients were asked about their alcohol habits at routine checkups, less than half were asked about binge drinking, defined as five or more drinks on an occasion for men and four or more drinks for women. And of those people who were asked and fit the binge-drinking criteria, most weren't offered any help

### **New Survey Shows that Few Residency Programs Train Physicians on Treating Pregnant Women with Opioid Use Disorder**

- According to a new survey, few family residency programs in the U.S. are providing training on prescribing medication for opioid use disorder to pregnant women
- Looking at data from more than 5,100 family medicine physicians who responded to American Board of Family Medicine surveys in 2016, 2017, and 2018, researchers found that only 153 said they both deliver babies and prescribe the opioid use disorder medication buprenorphine. Another 108 said they provide maternity care and prescribe buprenorphine, but do not deliver babies
- At the same time, 25% of those who said they prescribe buprenorphine to expectant mothers came from a minority of family medicine residency programs
- The authors emphasize creating incentives for training programs to integrate opioid use disorder treatment with maternal care to improve access to the vulnerable population of mothers with substance use disorder

### **Survey Results Show that Primary Care Not Ready to Manage Increased Patients with Dementia**

- According to [survey results](#) from the Alzheimer's Association, half of primary care physicians say their field is not prepared to handle the increasing number of people with dementia they expect to be treating in the next five years
- As the population with dementia grows, general practitioners are going to need to handle more of the responsibility of diagnosing and caring for people, but according to the survey, about 40% of primary care physicians say they are "never" or only "sometimes comfortable" diagnosing dementia, and 27% say they are uncomfortable answering questions from patients about dementia
- Most of the physicians said they received only "very little" training on dementia in their residencies

## **WEEKEND READING**

[KAISER HEALTH NEWS](#): As Youth Suicides Climb, Anguished Parents Begin to Speak Out

[CNN BUSINESS](#): How Managers Can Help Employees with Mental Health Issues

[FORBES](#): Younger Workers Take Mental Health Seriously – And Employers Should, Too

**PSYCHOLOGY TODAY:** Yes, Air Pollution is Affecting Our Mental Health

**YOUTH TODAY:** SEL Programs Can Make Students More Employable

**\*\*The information compiled in this email originated from various news sources including: Politico, Axios, Vox, The Hill, Modern Healthcare, Stat, and Kaiser Health News\*\***