



CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE NEWS

AUSTIN, TX: *Austin City Council to consider \$4 million for mental health first responders:* The Austin City Council will vote on reallocating millions of tax dollars from traditional policing to mental health services. Austin Mayor Steve Adler talks about situations where someone calls 9-1-1 to report a loved one in mental distress. The caller is used to the occasional melt-down, but this time their loved one is struggling to get back under control. Mayor Adler says, "We're thinking if we have mental health first responders to assist our police officers, be there to make some of the calls about what level of force is necessary to de-escalate situations, we can make the city safer for all of us." Austin's city council will vote on spending \$4 million to expand the city's relationship with Integral Care-- the county's mental health services-- to get 24/7 access to trained mental health responders. The plan will fund an additional advanced psychiatric nurse practitioner and a psychiatrist and increase access to mental telehealth services for the city's first responders. All of this will boost Austin's EMCOT— Expanded Mobile Crisis Outreach Team." It's a big part of this city council's "reimagining public safety." We're going to be hearing a lot about them.

CHICAGO, IL: *Mayor Lori Lightfoot and CDPH Announce \$8 Million Annual Investments to Expand Access to Trauma-Informed Mental Health Services:* Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D., announced the awarding of \$8 million in annual grant funding to 32 community-based organizations to provide trauma-informed mental healthcare in the city's areas of highest need. These 32 centers of care will work with the existing CDPH mental health clinics in comprising a mental health safety net system where all persons can receive care regardless of ability to pay, health insurance status or immigration status. This investment is the centerpiece of the Framework for Mental Health Equity that was announced by Mayor Lightfoot and CDPH last year to transform mental healthcare with a focus on equity. Under this Framework, CDPH has doubled its mental health budget from 2019 and prioritized investment on Chicago's South and West Sides, which is consistent with the City's focus on equity and neighborhood re-investment. Of the 32 funded proposals, 30 will also expand mental health services for children, adolescents, and young adults, and all 32 will expand services into community areas of highest need. This investment will bolster the current safety net system with resources that can be used to hire more staff, expand existing services, fund new programs in communities of high need and promote collaborations that integrate mental healthcare with primary care. The result will be tens of thousands more patients served, better access to care for the underserved and integrated care for the whole person. CDPH also announced today a \$1.6 million annual investment to integrate holistic healthcare services for people experiencing homelessness. Through this program, Heartland Alliance Health and Lawndale Christian Health Center will provide mental health services to people at homeless shelters and encampments. This will bring critical mental health and primary care services outside the walls of clinics to persons experiencing homelessness who are also living with serious mental illness, substance use disorders and other chronic health conditions. In addition to the investments in a publicly-funded system of mental healthcare, CDPH is also launching the city's first public mental health awareness campaign in partnership with the communications firm Edelman. This campaign will seek to improve awareness of publicly-funded mental health services available to all Chicago residents, combat mental health stigma, and build awareness of mental health as a critical public health issue. "The Framework for Mental Health Equity is a clear commitment to creating an effective, accessible and inclusive mental health system that cares for and heals the whole person," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This

unprecedented \$8 million investment will do just that and move this framework forward by providing tens of thousands of additional Chicagoans in our under-resourced communities with the care they need—regardless of their ability to pay, health insurance status or immigration status. I am grateful to CDPH and every center of care that has partnered with us on this investment and look forward to continuing to work with them as we close the mental healthcare gap once and for all."

HOUSTON / HARRIS COUNTY, TX: *Houston, Harris County each pledge \$5 million to mental health center for homeless:* The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the vulnerability of individuals who are homeless and have mental illnesses. It is not only the unhealthy conditions on the streets that make the unsheltered homeless "at-risk" to COVID-19; most suffer from underlying, chronic health conditions. An estimated 15-25 percent of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Harris County and the greater Houston area suffer from severe mental health issues making it difficult for city, county and local partners to quickly assist and house them out of harm's way. Social distancing requirements have also reduced homeless shelter capacity. These extremely acute individuals have a large impact on first responders and hospitals by routinely requiring emergency intervention. These individuals increase the risk of COVID-19 exposure to first responders and the community. Both the City of Houston and the Harris County Commissioners Court are each investing \$5 million toward the new COVID-19 Homeless Respite and Rehabilitation Center to fill this need in our community. The new facility, which will be operated by The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, will implement a key recommendation of the Harris County Homeless Taskforce. The Harris Center is the state-designated Local Mental Health Authority and Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) Authority serving Harris County, Texas. As the largest behavioral and developmental disability care center in Texas, The Harris Center provided care to over 79,000 people in fiscal year 2019.

KENT, WA: *City of Kent imposes sales tax hike to pay for affordable housing:* The Kent City Council approved a one-tenth of 1% hike in the local sales tax to raise an estimated \$2.8 million per year to help pay for affordable housing and related services. The council voted unanimously on Tuesday night, to impose the new 0.1% tax in order to keep the money in Kent rather than part of King County's plan to raise the sales tax and spread the funds countywide. The King County Council is expected to approve the tax hike Oct. 13. But sales tax revenue collected in Kent will remain in the city. A minimum of 60% of the revenue from the sales tax hike must target people whose income is at or below 60 percent of the area median income and who have behavioral health disabilities, veterans, senior citizens, homeless families with children, unaccompanied homeless youth or young adults, or domestic violence survivors. The remaining funds collected must be used for the operation, delivery or evaluation of mental and behavioral health treatment programs and services or housing-related services.

SOUTH BAY, CA: *New Beach Cities Health District program tackles mental health during coronavirus:* The Beach Cities Health District is offering a respite from the isolation many feel in a community already under mental pressure even before the coronavirus pandemic emerged. A new health program dubbed the *Mental Health & Happiness Series* was fortuitously rolled out early this year after the district analyzed how to respond to data from a 2017 Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index it conducted. The study revealed that beach cities residents weren't doing too well with mental health—and that was before the pandemic. So BCHD decided to make a concerted effort to address mental health. The workshops are designed to: Increase mental health resilience by helping participants maximize gratitude for the things they possess in these uncertain times; Boost empathy by improving listening skills; Cultivate bravery by empowering people to overcome obstacles and plan for positive outcomes; and Reaffirm purpose by building a "proactive coping toolkit" that examines personal strengths to create a positive outlook.

BEXAR COUNTY, TX: *Bexar County Aims To Improve Deputies' Mental Health Crisis Response, Prevent Violence:* Combat veteran Damian Daniels was shot and killed by a Bexar County Sheriff's Office deputy

responding to a mental health call on Aug. 25. In response, county officials are rolling out a program that will train deputies to identify mental health calls and reroute them to a unit specifically equipped to handle those kinds of crises, to prevent more unnecessary violence in law enforcement interactions with individuals experiencing mental health conditions. The pilot program is a partnership between the Office of Criminal Justice, the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC), the Bexar County Sheriff's Office, Acadian Ambulance and the Center for Health Care Services.

COLLIN COUNTY, TX: *Collin County designates juvenile mental health program:* The Collin County Commissioners Court approved designating a Juvenile Mental Health Intervention Program during its Monday meeting. The program, a specialty treatment court, comes as a partnership between the county's Juvenile Probation Department and the 417th District Court. Centering around the court, the program is angled to serve as an outpatient treatment system that would average at about nine months for children between 10 and 17 years old who have been diagnosed with mental illness. The program is called Juvenile Mental Health Intervention Program (JMHIP) and provides community-based treatment and judicial supervision in an evidence-based, restorative approach to foster treatment and support for program participants and their families, and community-protection for citizens. The program aims to help juvenile offenders who have a mental illness and are acting out or violating the law, according to documentation provided to the commissioners court. The program would use a multidimensional approach that would include families, treatment providers and local school districts. The goal, according to the statement, is to lower the amount of referrals to the criminal justice system while working with participants and their families through mental illness.

PINELLAS COUNTY, FL: *Pinellas mental health counselors, police team up in new telehealth program:* The Pinellas Community Foundation announced Thursday it would distribute \$2.6 million in CARES Act funding toward expanding mental health training and resources. One of the initiatives will address a glaring need by giving law enforcement officers 24/7 access to telehealth mental health services. That would allow officers to remotely connect with a professional who could help them when they interact with someone with mental illness or who is experiencing a mental health crisis. Clearwater nonprofit Directions for Living is partnering with the Largo Police Department to test the program. Directions President and CEO April Lott said if successful, the program could be expanded to other law enforcement agencies that don't have the resources to hire their own mental health counselors or social workers. The goal is to help the person in need and take pressure off officers who often have limited training helping someone in crisis. Pinellas Sheriff Bob Gualtieri also recently announced that his agency would expand its mental health unit from two to six deputy-social worker teams. The unit was previously staffed with Directions social workers, but he said he will bring those positions in-house for the expansion. The program will work like this: When an officer responds to a mental health-related call, they can use their phone or laptop to connect online to a Directions counselor, who will conduct a clinical assessment of the person. That will help the officer decide whether the person needs immediate help, or if they can be helped by a follow-up visit from a counselor later on. If they need immediate help, the Largo Police Department's officer-social worker team can be sent to help, or the person can be taken into custody under the Baker Act, a law that allows for an involuntary evaluation of someone believed to be a harm to themselves or others.

GEORGIA: *Georgia launches mental health COVID-19 assistance through \$1.74 million grant:* The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities has relaunched the Georgia Recovery Project with a \$1.74 million grant. The program activates upon a presidential disaster declaration and supports mental health disaster response. The current initiative is designed to help people whose mental health has been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aims to reach 80,000 Georgians during the lifecycle of the grant, which runs through June 15, 2021. Target populations include older adults, especially those in nursing homes; health care workers; schools and universities; people with behavioral health challenges or

intellectual and developmental disabilities; public safety workers; military personnel and veterans; and farmers. However, the Georgia Recovery Project is available to help any Georgian in need. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, assistance will be primarily implemented through two vehicles: regional crisis counseling teams and the Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line. Each of DBHDD's six regions has a crisis counseling team comprised of two or three crisis counselors and one crisis community liaison. Crisis counselors provide psychoeducation, assessments, non-intensive support with referrals if needed, and links to other community resources to help people cope with their circumstances. The Georgia Recovery Project is funded by a Crisis Counseling Program grant awarded jointly by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

MICHIGAN: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D-MI) Signs FY2021 Budget Includes New Mental Health Investments:

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has signed the state budget for the fiscal year 2021. The \$62.8 billion budget prioritizes new mental health investments including: \$5.6 million for mental health counselors to assist children in schools across Michigan with mental health needs; \$20 million to support the state's psychiatric hospitals so that Michiganders in need of mental health services have improved access and care; and \$2.5 million to provide first responders with the mental health services they need, including treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

NEW MEXICO: Public Education Department Wins \$10 Million Grant For Student Behavioral Health: The New Mexico Public Education Department has received a five-year federal grant worth nearly \$10 million to improve access to school-based mental health services. The funds will be used to increase the number of behavioral health service providers in selected school districts and charter schools, with selection based on family income, substance abuse rates, student suicide rates and student-provider ratios. To improve retention, the proposal includes stipends and increased pay for providers working in the identified districts and schools, with a priority given to rural areas and those serving predominantly Native American populations. The grant proposal was a collaboration between the Public Education Department and the Department of Health's Office of School and Adolescent Health. Success of the program will be measured both by number and retention rate of behavioral health care providers in schools and by responses from students to the NM Risk and Resiliency Survey administered in the fall of odd-numbered years. Success of the program will be measured both by number and retention rate of behavioral healthcare providers in schools and by responses from students to the NM Risk and Resiliency Survey administered in the fall of odd-numbered years. The Public Education Department will collaborate with the selected districts and charters to coordinate recruitment and retention work and with Native American communities to support those students and communities.

EXECUTIVE

Trump Administration Issues Mental Health Executive Order

- On Monday, the White House issued President Trump's Executive Order on Saving Lives Through Increased Support For Mental- and Behavioral-Health Needs, which orders the creation of a Coronavirus Mental Health Working Group, co-chaired by the HHS Secretary Alex Azar and Brooke Rollins, Acting Director of the Domestic Policy Council (or their designees)
- The E.O calls for the submission of a plan by the working group for addressing mental health impacts of COVID-19, and calls for agencies to maximize support, including safe in-person services, for Americans in need of behavioral health treatment
- You can read the Executive Order [here](#)

Trump Administration Announces HHS-HRSA Behavioral Health Provider Relief Funding

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), announced \$20 billion in new funding for providers on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic
- Under this Phase 3 General Distribution allocation, providers that have already received Provider Relief Fund payments are invited to apply for additional funding that considers financial losses and changes in operating expenses caused by the coronavirus
- Previously ineligible providers, such as those who began practicing in 2020 are also invited to apply, and an expanded group of behavioral health providers confronting the emergence of increased mental health and substance use issues exacerbated by the pandemic are also eligible for relief payments
- You can read more [here](#)

SAMHSA Launches New App to Help Those with SMI Develop a Crisis Plan

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a new mobile app, *My Mental Health Crisis Plan*, which allows individuals who have serious mental illness (SMI) to create a plan to guide their treatment during a mental health crisis
- The app was developed through SMI Adviser, a project funded by SAMHSA and administered by the American Psychiatric Association
- The app provides an easy, step-by-step process for individuals to create and share a psychiatric advance directive (PAD). A PAD is a legal document that includes a list of instructions and preferences that the individual wishes to be followed in case of a mental health crisis, should they not be able to make their own decisions
- My Mental Health Crisis Plan allows individuals with serious mental illness to:
 - Clearly state treatment preferences, including treatments to use and those not to use; medications to use and those not to use; preferences for hospitals; and preferences for doctors and other mental health professionals
 - Decide who can act on their behalf, by designating a trusted person (sometimes referred to as “healthcare agent,” “proxy,” or “health care power of attorney”) as a decision-maker on their behalf. Some states require appointment of a decision-maker to carry out the PAD instructions
 - Identify whom to notify in the event of a mental health crisis
 - Share the plan with others, including doctors, other members of the care team, and family and friends
- You can read more on the app [here](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

New Research Shows 2016 Election Led to Increase in Mental Health Symptoms Among Muslim Students

- According to new research, the 2016 U.S. presidential election may have led to an increase in mental health symptoms among Muslim students
- More than 75,000 students were surveyed — around 2.2% of whom were Muslim
- Scientists found a seven percentage point increase among Muslim students in clinically significant mental health symptoms — including depression and anxiety — in the 14 months after the 2016 election compared to the 14 months before the election
- Those Muslim students who said they were religious experienced the biggest change after the election — a nearly 11 percentage point jump
- You can view the research [here](#)

World Health Organization (WHO) Report Shows Covid-19 Disrupted Mental Health Services in the Vast Majority of Countries

- According to a new WHO report that surveyed 130 countries around the globe the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide
- Here are some highlights:
 - Telemedicine: While more than 80% of high-income countries report deploying telemedicine to help people access mental health services, fewer than half of low-income nations have done so
 - Vulnerable populations: Majorities of countries report service interruptions for vulnerable populations, including 61% that said so about services for pre- and postnatal women and 70% that reported disruption in mental care for older people
 - Types of service: Two-thirds of countries saw disruptions to counseling and psychotherapy services, while 30% reported interruptions to medications for mental, neurological, and substance use disorders
- You can view the report [here](#)

Addiction Policy Forum Announces New “Stop the Stigma” Campaign

- The Addiction Policy Forum have launched a nationwide campaign called “Stop the Stigma: Tackling the Stigma of Addiction through Education”
- The national campaign will address the stigma and discrimination that people with a substance use disorder face through an awareness campaign, a podcast, and workshops and trainings for key stakeholders and the public. The campaign will also focus on data collection to measure the incidence and prevalence of stigma, as well as the effectiveness of interventions and resources

- The “Stop the Stigma” campaign seeks to directly support local communities in addressing stigma and improve the community’s response to addiction through these components:
 - Stop the Stigma Trainings- Free training sessions and workshops for policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators, employers, faith leaders, youth and the public
 - Awareness Campaign - The national media campaign will help combat the stigma against those with a substance use disorder, raise public awareness around the need to improve responses and treatment for SUD, while highlighting innovations and community action
 - Research and Data - The project will focus on data collection to measure the incidence and prevalence of stigma, as well as the effectiveness of interventions and resources
- You can read more about the campaign [here](#)

WEEKEND READING

BBC: Coronavirus: How lockdown has affected mental health

FORBES: The Mental Health Resources That Teachers Need

NEWSHUB: Mental health and addiction services overwhelmed with demand amid COVID-19 lockdowns

FORBES: How Your Company Can Support Employee Mental Health Year-Round

NBC NEWS: Impact of wildfires affecting residents' mental health

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM: This chart shows just how much COVID-19 has affected mental health in America

****The information in this e-mail originated from the following news sources including: Axios, Politico, CQ Roll Call, The Hill, Modern Healthcare, STAT, Kaiser Health News, CityLab and Vox****