



CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE

NEW YORK CITY, NY: *First Lady Chirlane McCray Announces Largest Citywide Home Visiting Services*

Program for All First-Time Parents: First Lady Chirlane McCray announced today New Family Home Visits, a program that will offer home visiting services to all first-time parents in New York City. Families will be matched with services that best fit their needs and offered up to six home visits. They will also be provided with comprehensive health education and connection to resources which will include mental health screenings for anxiety and depression, infant feeding, infant safe sleep and referrals to services such as WIC and SNAP. The program will be the largest city home visiting program in the nation. The city will invest \$43M a year by 2024 and beyond, aiming to reach 45,000 families across the city when fully implemented. The program will launch this spring in Brooklyn and will reach all Brooklyn families with their first baby by 2021. The program will build upon investments in social emotional learning to build resilience and coping skills in young children as well as baby showers for healthy emotional development. You can find more information [here](#).

CALGARY, CANADA: *City calls for ideas to improve the mental health and addictions system*: The city is asking for the “wisdom of the community” to find ways to help people navigate mental health and addictions treatment. The initiative, which is part of Calgary’s mental health and addictions strategy, will set aside \$1 million to fund and try out proposals from Calgarians. The initiative is the first update since the city unveiled its 21-member stewardship group for the strategy in November. City council voted to take \$25 million from the city’s rainy-day reserve fund for the strategy in 2018. The plan will see \$15 million go toward existing social services agencies and \$10 million for new work.

SANTA CRUZ, CA: *City of Santa Cruz Decriminalizes ‘Magic Mushrooms’ and Other Psychedelics*: The city of Santa Cruz, California, has become the latest city to decriminalize “magic mushrooms” and other natural psychedelics, including ayahuasca and peyote. The Santa Cruz City Council voted unanimously to approve a resolution that makes investigating and arresting people 21 and older for using or possessing psychoactive plants and fungi among the lowest priorities for law enforcement. Tuesday’s resolution doesn’t necessarily make it legal to use or possess natural psychedelics, but it does mean that the city won’t be using resources to investigate or arrest people for doing so. People could still face penalties for the sale or cultivation of those substances. Santa Cruz is the third city to take such a step. Denver voted to decriminalize psychedelic mushrooms in May of last year, while Oakland decriminalized all psychedelic plants and fungi shortly after.

SAN JOSE, CA: *San José Public Library Joins California State Library's Mental Health Initiative*: The San José Public Library (SJPL) is partnering with the California State Library's Mental Health Initiative to help bring awareness about the importance of mental health. SJPL will be working with a local partner in May in recognition of Mental Health Awareness month. This collaboration will provide a library event that will help the public gain insight into issues of mental health. Based off the latest Health Interview Survey, nearly 1 in 10 adults in California suffer from functional impairment due to a mental disorder. That is 9 percent of all adults in the state that are dealing with psychological adversities that impact their daily work and social life.

SEATTLE, WA: *Seattle will distribute 700 naloxone kits, hold trainings in bid to counter fentanyl overdoses:* In an attempt to help battle the opioid crisis, the city of Seattle will distribute 700 naloxone kits and convene 25 training sessions with community organizations as part of an effort to counter overdoses caused by pills laced with the synthetic opioid fentanyl, Mayor Jenny Durkan said Thursday. Local paramedics deployed naloxone more than 330 times last year. Still, eight Seattle-area teenagers died from fentanyl-related overdoses in 2019, Durkan said, calling fentanyl “a growing problem” for the city. Seattle police seized about 228,000 fentanyl and fentanyl-laced pills last year, up from only 187 in 2018, the mayor said. This month alone, the police have seized about 41,000 such pills, she said at a City Hall news conference, joined by the mother and stepfather of a Ballard High School student who died in September from an overdose. The naloxone kits, which have two doses, will cost Seattle \$93.74 each and will be distributed at the city-convened training sessions. The sessions will begin this spring and will be led by representatives from the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the University of Washington and from the Washington State Department of Health. Participants will learn how to recognize overdose signs and how to administer naloxone. The city has scheduled an April session for Seattle Public Schools nurses. State lawmakers last year passed a bill requiring school districts with more than 2,000 students to obtain and store naloxone. A separate session will be held for Seattle Public Schools security guards and another will target nightlife business owners and workers, the mayor’s office said.

TORONTO, CANADA: *City of Toronto examining how anti-Black racism impacts mental health:* The City of Toronto has launched a new campaign aimed at raising awareness about the mental health effects of anti-Black racism. The City recently announced a campaign on anti-Black racism, in partnership with the TAIBU Community Health Centre, as a part of its Toronto For All anti-discrimination initiative, which has focused on Indigenous and transgender youth communities, as well as issues like Islamophobia, disability inclusion, intimate partner violence and anti-ageism. The awareness campaign will see three different posters placed in transit shelters until Feb. 23, followed by Black Mental Health Day on March 2. Part of the City of Toronto’s anti-Black racism awareness campaign, called for affected community members to seek mental health care or to encourage others to do so, as well as to share personal stories. It also called for organizations and institutions to put in place plans for increasing access to culturally-responsive mental health supports and for increased community-led initiatives.

KANAWHA COUNTY, WV: *Schools’ “support bus” provides mobile mental health aide:* Their new “support bus” has been running since the fall and serves all 42 Kanawha County Elementary Schools. A mobile approach to mental health in the school system. “Our students are in crisis right now and they just need help and support,” says Kanawha County’s Elementary Schools’ behavioral and mental health coordinator, Libby Bird. Since the opioid crisis devastated the state, one of the support bus counselors, Diana Thaxton, says she has seen a greater need for mental health support in the school system. “Just in the last 5 – 6 six years when the heroin addiction took off I mean that’s when I really saw the biggest jump...when you’re living in trauma you’re in constant fight or flight phase...and you are not going to be able to pay attention at school,” Thaxton says. When the bus arrives at each school the recommended students climb aboard and talk, play and color with staff on board. They lead the conversations and it gives them time to be in a safe and supported environment.

MADISON COUNTY, AL: *Launching Assisted Outpatient Treatment program for mental illness:* Madison County is launching a program for people with untreated, severe mental illness. The Madison County probate court will start an Assisted Outpatient Treatment program or AOT on February 3. AOT is a court-ordered program that will focus on outpatient care for people with severe mental illness who are capable of surviving safely in the community with treatment but have shown problems continuing with voluntary treatment. A person’s participation in AOT will be determined after a petition for involuntary commitment is processed, condition and needs are assessed, a physician confirms that outpatient treatment is appropriate, a specific

plan is developed for treatment, and a hearing is held before the court. The individual will report to the court on a monthly basis to confirm they are compliant with their treatment plan and review any concerns that might exist.

ARIZONA: *Arizona students will get mental health breaks, if bill in state legislature passes:* Students across Arizona could be allowed to have excused absences due to mental or behavioral health, if a bill is passed in the state legislature. SB 1444, which is sponsored by State Sen. Sean Bowie and co-sponsored by 14 other state lawmakers, will allow the state's Department of Education to identify an "absence due to the mental or behavioral health of a pupil" as an excused absence, and will also allow the department to adopt guidelines to determine what constitutes as a mental or behavioral health break for students. According to current Arizona Department of Education guidelines, an excused absence is defined as an absence due to illness, a doctor's appointment, bereavement, family emergencies, and out-of-school exemptions.

CALIFORNIA: *Blue Shield of CA Pledges \$20M to Support Behavioral Health Services:* Blue Shield of California has announced a \$20 million commitment to the California Access to Housing and Services fund in order to enhance behavioral health services. The fund, proposed by Governor Gavin Newsom in his 2020 to 2021 budget last week, aims to solve the state's homelessness crisis and proposes reforms to Medi-Cal to incorporate both physician and behavioral health. The contribution will support behavioral health services and initiatives to tackle the homelessness crisis in order to ensure that commitment to health and wellness is at the forefront.

CALIFORNIA: *Considers Permitting Students Excused Mental Health Days:* the California legislature is considering something similar. State Senator Anthony Portantino has introduced a bill that would change the education code to allow for mental health related excused absences. For him, mental health is a personal issue.

COLORADO: *Bill mandating Colorado insurers cover annual mental health exams advances:* Landmark legislation to require health insurance companies to cover an annual mental health wellness examination free of charge in Colorado, the same way annual physicals are covered advanced in the House Health & Insurance Committee. The committee passed House Bill 1086 unanimously, moving it to the Appropriations Committee to consider an estimated \$13,000 in annual costs to administer the requirement. If signed into law, the bill would take effect Jan. 1, 2022, and would apply to the estimated 1 million Coloradans who are covered by employer-provided health insurance and through the individual health insurance marketplace. No other state imposes the requirement on health insurers.

COLORADO: *Child Mental Health Workforce Development Legislation Introduced:* A bill in the Colorado Legislature would create a voluntary state-wide system of mental health consultants to support mental health care in a variety of settings for children up to age eight. The consultants would help expand the current system of mental health care for young children and help out in early childhood care centers, elementary schools, home visitations, and in child welfare and public health care situations. The measure, House Bill 20-1006, seeks to increase the number of early childhood consultants in the state and to establish job qualifications and standards and guidelines for mental health consultants developed from evidence-based programs. A list of certified mental health consultant will then be published listing the names of qualified professionals.

FLORIDA: *First lady announces Hurricane Michael mental health funding:* Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis announced on Thursday \$690,000 to extend a federal mental health program for residents impacted by Hurricane Michael. During a visit to Bay County, DeSantis said the Federal Emergency Management Agency had agreed to use the money to extend its Project Hope program for another 90 days in all counties hit by the

Category 5 hurricane. With the money, the program will continue employing mental health counselors to help people in hardest-hit areas, she said.

MICHIGAN: Gov. Whitmer signs bill to create statewide mental health hotline: Michigan will create a statewide mental health hotline under legislation signed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. The telephone referral system will be available 24 hours a day, seven days of week and refer people experiencing a mental health crisis to service providers. A spending law approved in 2018 included \$3 million to develop, operate and maintain a hotline pilot program. The new law, which was enacted Monday and takes effect in three months, will expand that program statewide. Michigan's 46 Community Mental Health service providers (CMHSPs) and 10 prepaid inpatient health plans already must maintain hotlines intended to address crisis-related calls first. Gov. Whitmer said signing the legislation is "a necessary step towards giving all Michiganders the care they need."

MONTANA: Investing \$80M in community mental health services: Montana state officials say they plan to invest \$16 million annually over the next five years to expand community-based services for people with severe and disabling mental illness. The funding under an existing Medicaid waiver benefit option will increase the number of people already receiving services from 357 to 750 by 2025. Officials say the proposal will serve more people discharged from Montana State Hospital, Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center and those using the Money Follows the Person program. The plan is contingent on approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

OHIO: Naloxone access skyrocketed after new prescription-free policy: Naloxone dispensing in Ohio rose by more than 2,300% after a new policy allowed pharmacists to dispense the opioid overdose reversal drug without a prescription. State lawmakers approved the legislation in 2015 in response to Ohio's high overdose rates, which was then second-highest in the nation. Looking at data between July 2014 to January 2017, scientists found that naloxone dispensing spiked from 191 orders before the policy to more than 4,600 in the years after its implementation. Three large pharmacy chains increased their dispensing of naloxone by more than 3,200%, suggesting a widespread uptake of the new law. At the same time, the analysis found that those residing in low-employment and high-poverty counties were between two and three times more likely to have access to naloxone under the new policy.

OKLAHOMA: Legislation highlights mental health issues in schools: Two pieces of legislation have been introduced, that would change the way schools deal with mental health issues in students. One house bill, authored by Representative Mickey Dollens would require Oklahoma schools to add mental health curriculum, for all students, kindergarten through high school seniors. If House Bill 3348 becomes law, starting in August of 2021, schools would have to add, where deemed appropriate, education on mental health and how it relates to physical health. That would include education on substance abuse. Schools would work with state health professionals on that curriculum. Representative Dollens has also authored a bill about suicide prevention. If House Bill 3346 passed, schools would be required to print, on student I.D.s, the number of the national suicide prevention lifeline, the crisis text line, campus police when able, and a local suicide prevention hotline number. This would include students seventh grade and older, including higher education.

RHODE ISLAND: Governor proposes SRO funding include mental health professionals: Gov. Gina Raimondo is recommending the legislature use funding set aside to hire school resource officers (SROs) to expand mental health assistance in schools. In her FY21 budget proposal, the governor included assistance counselors, school counselors, social workers, and psychologists in the positions school districts should seek to hire in the upcoming fiscal year. "When compared to the anticipated expenditures of the original SRO Categorical, approximately \$1.5 million will be available in matching funds to LEAs for new mental health positions in FY 2021," the report reads.

VERMONT: Governor proposes mental health mobile response unit: Vermont Gov. Phil Scott has proposed a mobile response unit that would treat mental health emergencies for young people. A pilot initiative will begin in Rutland before potentially expanding to the rest of the state, said Department of Mental Health Commissioner Sarah Squirrel. The unit would support existing emergency services in Rutland by providing intervention and de-escalation services for children and families in distress, the Rutland Herald reported Saturday. Rutland was selected for the pilot because it has high numbers of children using emergency department services. Scott has said the mobile response unit would be funded by a \$600,000 line item in the proposed state budget

WASHINGTON: Proposed bill would help victims of gun violence access mental health treatment: Senate Bill 6553 was introduced by Senator David Frockt, who represents the 46th legislative district. The bill would require Washington state to address what it says is a growing need for mental health care for victims of gun violence. It suggests doing so by providing evidence-based treatment and comprehensive information on how those victims could access treatment. Under the bill, the Washington State Department of Commerce would contract with a level one trauma center to provide counseling and refer victims to proper health providers who could help. The bill also proposes a guide, created by the University of Washington's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress, that would recommend prosecuting attorneys, trauma centers and more services to victims

WISCONSIN: First Lady Kathy Evers Visits School to Learn about Social Emotional Learning: Wisconsin First Lady Kathy Evers were among state and regional leaders who came to Dodgeland Elementary School to learn about how social-emotional learning is done at the school. Representatives from the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health, the Department of Public Instruction Office of Student Services, the Department of Children and Family, and members of the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation's Transformation Council were part of the group visiting the school. Evers and the rest of the visitors were able to see the Pyramid Model with a 4K classroom. The Pyramid Model is used to help the youngest learners develop SEL skills. The visitors also observed a guidance lesson by the school's elementary counselor for elementary students, visited an Oasis room which is a room that is dedicated to proactively address students' social and emotional needs to help them return to class ready to learn, and listened to a panel of teachers share their thoughts, experiences, and data on how the SEL initiatives have impacted the students and their learning at school.

EXECUTIVE

Wednesday, February 12th Deadline for FCC Proposed Rule Implementing 988 at the Suicide Hotline Telephone Number Comments

- On January 15th the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) proposed to designate 9-8-8 as the national number for mental health crises and suicide prevention
- The proposed rule can be found here: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FCC-2020-0021-0001>

New CDC Data Shows Life Expectancy Increased in 2018 Due to Drop in Fatal Overdoses

- New CDC data released shows life expectancy in the United States increased in 2018 for the first time in four years, driven largely by a drop in cancer-related deaths and a historic decline in fatal overdoses other factors such as suicide ticked up in the past year

- The data confirms fatal drug overdoses dropped in 2018 for the first time in nearly 30 years
- Americans born in 2018 are expected to live to 78.7 years, up from 78.6 the year before. The increase is a break from the three-year streak where the life expectancy either decreased or stayed the same — largely due to a dramatic rise in overdose deaths and suicide
- More than 67,000 people died of an overdose in 2018, the second-highest number ever recorded, but that represents a 4 percent decline from 2017. The overall death rate — a measure that accounts for changes in population — declined 5 percent year-over-year. The rate of drug overdose deaths from synthetic opioids — like fentanyl — increased by 10% between 2017 and 2018. Cocaine and meth overdose deaths are also on the rise.
- Rust Belt states Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia — all reported precipitous declines in overdose deaths in 2018, while California, Missouri, New Jersey and South Carolina all saw a significant uptick.

Supreme Court Allows Trump Administration Public Charge Rule to Move Forward

- In a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration to leave in place a rule that would connect the use of public benefits with the likelihood of being granted permanent residency status
- The “public charge” rule was first announced last August, and immigrants could be denied a green card if they used public benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid, or Medicare for more than a year over a three-year period
- The rule had been blocked from going into effect by several federal judges, but the Supreme Court’s move now means that those applying for a green card have to show they are self-sufficient
- The new rule throws the immigration status of several thousand legal immigrants in jeopardy, and could keep undocumented immigrants from seeking preventive care

Trump Administration Announces New Medicaid Block Grant Guidance

- The White House signed off on a long-developing plan to overhaul Medicaid by letting states shift some program funding to block grants
- In exchange, for able-bodied adults in the program, states could apply to receive a fixed federal payment and freedom from many of the program’s rules
- The block grant plan, “Healthy Adult Opportunity” which invites states to request capped funding for poor adults covered by Obamacare’s Medicaid expansion, also would let states limit health benefits and drugs available to some patients
- The House passed a resolution opposing the new block grant guidance on Thursday

Trump Administration Allowed Opioids National Emergency to Lapse

- For nine days, the nation's opioid crisis was no longer considered a "public health emergency" after the Trump administration failed to renew a two-year-old declaration that expired last week
- The emergency declaration must be renewed every 90 days
- An HHS spokesperson disputed that the department "forgot" to renew the status, saying instead that it was a "clerical error" and the emergency status had been renewed
- The declaration has since been renewed

CDC Releases Suicide by Occupation Report

- New [CDC report data](#) on suicides by occupation shows that men who are miners and quarry workers are most likely to die by suicide
- By occupation: Among men, fishing and hunter workers had the highest suicide rates, followed by musicians and singers. Among women, artists then laborers and others involved in freight had the highest rates
- By industry: Those in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction were most likely to die by suicide, followed by those in construction and other services such as auto repair
- The study was based on data from only 32 U.S. states in 2016. The data also didn't include those in the military or those who were unemployed at the time of death, two populations who have historically had high suicide rates

CDC: Nearly a Third of US adults with Arthritis also has History of Depression

- Of the estimated 54.4 million adults in the United States with arthritis, approximately 32.1% also had a history of depression, according to 2017 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data collected by the CDC. In addition, 19% of adults with arthritis also had frequent mental distress
- They also found that among adults with arthritis, the prevalence of depression was significantly higher among women than men (36.3% vs. 24%), higher among lesbian/gay/bisexual adults vs. heterosexual adults (46.7% vs. 30.5%) and differed by education level and race/ethnicity
- In addition, a history of frequent mental distress was significantly more prevalent among women than men (19.9% vs. 14.6%) and lesbian/gay/bisexual adults vs. heterosexual adults (28% vs. 16.8%)

HOUSE

The House passed the following legislation this week:

- H.Res 826 Expressing Disapproval of the Trump Administration's Harmful Actions Towards Medicaid
- H.R 2474 Protecting the Right to Organize Act
- H.R 5687 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief and Puerto Rico Disaster Tax Relief Act

- H.R 4044 Protect and Restore America's Estuaries Act
- H.R 2382 USPS Fairness Act

Congressional Black Caucus Emergency Task Force on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health Releases Year End Report

- The caucus, chaired by Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman of New Jersey, released its year-end report [Ring the Alarm: the Crisis of Black Youth In America](#) which found the suicide rates in black children are growing faster than any other racial/ethnic group

IN OTHER NEWS

Morgan Stanley Launches the Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health

- Morgan Stanley announced the establishment of the [Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health](#) which brings together key leaders in the children's mental health space, will combine the resources and reach of Morgan Stanley and its Foundation with the knowledge and experience of its distinguished nonprofit partner organizations - view the [full release here](#)
- The Alliance will help address strategically children's mental health concerns and the far-reaching challenges of stress, anxiety, and depression. The Alliance will seek to drive impact for young people - especially in marginalized populations - by assisting youth through formative transitions, and helping parents recognize mental health disorders and support their children. Developing innovative approaches and scaling best practices, the Alliance will work to generate a systemic tipping point in how children's mental health is addressed.
- The Alliance will deliver catalytic philanthropy in four ways to help make a lasting impact on children's mental health:
 - Growth Capital – funding strategic nonprofit partner organizations to bring to scale proven methods of helping improve children's mental health outcomes.
 - Capacity Building – helping ensure that effective organizations can sustain their practices.
 - Seed Funding – bringing emerging and innovative ideas to fruition.
 - Thought Leadership – using its voice and our deep global connections to raise awareness, drive advanced thinking and reduce stigma.
- The founding nonprofit partner organizations of the Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health include:
 - U.S. Nonprofit Partner Organizations:
 - Child Mind Institute
 - The Jed Foundation
 - NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital
 - The Steve Fund
 - Mind HK, Hong Kong
 - Place2Be, London
 - SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), Glasgow
- To learn more about the Alliance, please see morganstanley.com/mentalhealthalliance

New Report Shows U.S Has Highest Suicide Rate among 11 Highest Income Countries

- A new report by the Commonwealth Fund shows that the U.S. has the highest suicide rates among wealthy nations
- In 2016, the suicide rate here was 13.9 suicide deaths per 100,000 people — while the U.K. had the lowest rate of the 11 high-income countries in the report, at 7.3 suicides per 100,000 people

New UK Study Shows Tweets about Mental Health Could be Predictor for ‘Crisis Episodes’

- A [new study](#) in the U.K. provides further evidence to support how social media can influence mental health
- Scientists retroactively looked at how frequently certain mental health topics were tweeted about and correlated them with two health facilities' instances of “crisis episodes” — defined as in-hospital or at-home incidents requiring the attention of hospital mental health professionals or referrals to crisis centers
- There was a small uptick in episodes on days with a more-than-average number of tweets on depression and schizophrenia
- The effect was higher when counting supportive or de-stigmatizing tweets: There was a 10% increase in crisis episodes at one facility on days with an above-average number of tweets supporting those with schizophrenia, for example. The findings only show an association, but could help health professionals better prepare for a possible increase in the need for mental health services

WEEKEND READING

[NPR](#): 3 out 5 Americans Are Lonely

[City Lab](#): How Meth Conquered a County

[Thrive Global](#): The Surprising Impact of Loneliness on Our Well-being — In and Out of the Workplace

[Rolling Stone](#): We Can’t Have All Our Artists Die: How the Music Industry Is Fighting the Mental Health Crisis

[Kaiser Health News](#): Diagnosed with Dementia, She Documented Her Wishes. They Said No.

[Education Week](#): The Changing Climate for Social-Emotional Learning

[The New Yorker](#): The Wrong Way to Fight the Opioid Crisis

****The information compiled in this email came from various news sources including: Politico, Vox, The Hill, CQ Roll Call, Modern Healthcare, Stat, and Kaiser Health News****