



CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE NEWS

NEW YORK CITY, NY: *Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray Announce Bridge to School Plan:*

Mayor Bill de Blasio, First Lady Chirlane McCray, and Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza announced “Bridge to School,” a Citywide initiative for the 2020-21 school year focused on the social and emotional well-being of students and adults in order to create a safe, supportive learning environment that confronts the trauma caused by the COVID-19 crisis. As a result, schools will be equipped to integrate trauma-informed practices into school reopening, and build off of last year’s major expansion of mental health supports in schools. Last year, the Department of Education made a historic investment measures to address the social-emotional needs of students and provide educators with the supports they need to be partners in that work. This work became more important than ever as schools transitioned to remote learning and New York City became the epicenter of a public health crisis. At the height of the pandemic, the DOE trained approximately 13,000 people throughout the spring and summer in a Trauma 101 series focused on grief and loss, bereavement and self-care in a crisis. This included Crisis Team members, who respond to schools that experience a loss and provide mental health supports, school leaders and school support staff. These practices were put into immediate use across the system during remote learning and supported students, families, and staff members who experienced losses this spring in coming together to begin healing. To enhance this key priority, the Fund for Public Schools has secured \$1.9 million in philanthropic funding from the Robin Hood, Gray, and Tiger foundations. These grants will help to equip school-based staff citywide with trauma-informed training, high quality resources, and ongoing support - all critical to effectively respond to students' social emotional needs in this challenging time. Already, 1,600 school leaders have completed this training, giving them skills to provide foundational classroom and school wide support and the ability to recognize when acute trauma requires a referral for more targeted support. Training will be made available to teachers at all schools. Available sessions include training on: Building capacity of school staff and school leaders to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and its impact on young people; Learning effective classroom and school-wide trauma informed care practices that align to existing social-emotional and mental health support systems used in the NYCDOE; Addressing trauma will be an ongoing need, and so the philanthropic support will also enable the DOE to partner with the Child Mind Institute to offer additional supports for school-based staff this fall, including webinars and workshops, videos and print materials to support social-emotional learning in the classroom, and a helpline for educations to receive additional guidance and support. The helpline will be available Monday through Friday, 8am to 8pm starting September 21st and these resources will remain available to educators through the end of 2020. Beyond training, and direct classroom support, the Department of Education is releasing the Bridge to School Resource Guide. This puts at educators’ fingertips grade-appropriate tools, like activities and lesson plans for both remote and in-person learning, that help students build coping skills, process grief, re-connect, and allow students to orient themselves to blended-learning or online classroom during first the few weeks of school. These resources are flexible, adaptable, and will be available to educators this week. In New York City, a comprehensive approach to supporting the whole child is the bedrock of an equitable education.

DENVER, CO: *Denver Aims To Expand Behavioral Services In STAR Program:* Denver City County will visit a resolution approving a proposed agreement between the City and County of Denver and Mental Health Center of Denver (MCHD) for expansion of the Denver Co-Responder Program with the Denver Police Department.

The council will discuss approving a contract with MHCD for \$1,227,161 for the expansion of the program funded by the 2019 Caring 4 Denver grant. During this initial phase, STAR's services are limited to central downtown. For STAR, mental health agencies got together with paramedics from Denver Health, using money from the voter-approved Caring 4 Denver ballot question. The pilot began amid nationwide protests against police brutality, and viral incidents leading to demands for police reform are still occurring.

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY: *City of Poughkeepsie police add mental health professional to respond to community needs:* The City of Poughkeepsie officers will soon have backup for instances in which mental health support may be more effective than traditional policing of crime. A behavioral health professional provided by Mental Health America of Dutchess County will assist the city police department through a pilot program. Police Chief Tom Pape said the case worker will have an office in the department, working five days a week, and assist officers on calls regarding mental health. The program, which Mayor Rob Rolison said is slated to begin by the end of this month, comes amid calls from advocates touting the importance of supporting the community holistically and funding programs outside of the police department, in the hopes of better serving residents' needs and defusing possible crime. He said he pulled \$15,000 to \$20,000 from the department's budget to run the pilot program until the end of the year, and Rolison plans put aside more money for the program in his 2021 budget proposal. A case worker will work under the department's Juvenile Division, the Behavioral Evaluation and Assistance Team, and alongside the department's Juvenile Division Youth Worker.

TORONTO, ON: *Toronto is getting its first safe drug supply sites:* Safe supply sites are set to open in Toronto for the first time — a shift that comes amid a worsening opioid overdose crisis, thanks to new funding from the federal government. Local MPs announced nearly \$1.6 million in funds for harm-reduction efforts in the city, with close to \$600,000 earmarked for a safer supply pilot project through a neighborhood-based organization. The goal is providing easier access to prescription opioids for drug users through existing community agencies, and potentially preventing deaths. Safe supply sites are facilities that help drug users gain access to legal prescription versions of drugs that are often purchased illegally and potentially contain toxic substances. In some cases, that could include a whole spectrum of drugs, from hallucinogens like MDMA and LSD to heroin and other opioids. In Toronto, this federally-funded project will be focusing on prescription opioids. The new funding includes more than \$582,000 for a 10-month emergency safe-supply pilot project led by the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, a west-end centre that already works with drug users. The sites will focus on agencies' existing clients, not the broader public. Those drug users will be able to gain prescriptions for hydromorphone tablets — a type of opioid — that they can pick up at a pharmacy, then take orally or inject.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: *Expands Mental Health Services For Parents And Families As Schools Prepare To Start:* Parents who are dealing with stress as the school year begins can access free counseling and other mental health services through a 24-hour hotline. Licensed social workers, psychologists and counselors will offer guidance on handling family stressors and, if necessary, link parents to school-based clinicians or early-childhood specialists, Mayor Muriel Bowser's administration announced Wednesday. Clinicians will also provide grief and trauma counseling for those who have lost loved ones, with parents eligible to undergo three follow-up sessions. The D.C. Department of Behavioral Health is coordinating these services, which are confidential and feature bilingual clinicians. It established the line earlier in the crisis to help struggling residents, and are focusing now on reaching parents who may be in need. Clinicians assigned to the program have experience with parents of children ranging in age from early childhood through high school, and residents can access the services by calling 1-888-793-4357. On Sept. 2, the District also will kick off its first "Wellness Wednesday," a new program that will offer interactive parent support groups online each week. Licensed professionals will oversee the sessions, which will run from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The first session's topic will be self-care for parents.

BERKELEY COUNTY, SC: *New program to offer mental health services to non-violent Berkeley Co offenders:* A new program in Berkeley County aims to provide mental health services to repeat non-violent offenders and inmates. The goal would be to keep them from serving jail time and unnecessarily overcrowding jails. The program will provide weekly mental health sessions for low-level offenders. They will also check in weekly with a judge and meet with a job coach to find employment.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY, MT: *Lewis & Clark County working to expand mental health services needed during pandemic:* Lewis and Clark County is working on expanding mental health services that are needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lewis and Clark County Commissioners approved Lewis and Clark Public Health to move forward with subcontracting InStar Community Services and Good Samaritan Ministries for additional peer support and direct mental health services. Substance abuse, anxiety and depression has been on the rise across the country during the pandemic. And with many losing their jobs, affording treatment can be financially daunting. Both organizations would be contracted to help those that can't afford the traditional costs of treatment. Good Samaritan Ministries, through Our Place drop-in center, and InStar would be expected to provide direct treatment and services needed for those diagnosed with substance abuse and/or mental illness, including virtual options. InStar would also help healthcare providers with supportive services and training to provide coping and stress management during COVID-19. Funding for the expanded services will be provided by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Emergency COVID-19 funds.

MADISON COUNTY, AL: *Madison County Sheriff's Office now has certified mental health officers:* The Madison County Sheriff's Office now has a team of certified mental health officers on the streets to help those in a crisis. Back in 2017, the Madison County Sheriff's Office formed a Crisis Intervention Team, a group trained to help people with mental health issues. Now, five deputies are certified mental health officers. Each deputy participated in an additional 200 hours of intensive training with mental health professionals. It's one-of-a-kind training to gain perspective on what it's like to live with a mental illness, knowledge that can mean the difference between someone getting help versus going to jail.

CALIFORNIA: *Poised To Become Leader On Mental Health Coverage:* Californians could see the most dramatic expansion of mental health and addiction coverage under state law in decades, if Gov. Gavin Newsom signs a bill that is likely heading to his desk in coming weeks. The bill – SB 855 by Democratic state Sen. Scott Wiener of San Francisco – would significantly expand what treatments are considered medically necessary for health insurance coverage. Current state law requires health plans to cover medically necessary treatment of just nine serious mental illnesses; the new law would expand that coverage to include a much broader array of mental health issues, notably substance use disorder and addiction, among others.

ILLINOIS: *State announces resources, assessments for student mental health:* The Illinois Emergency Management Agency and local emergency managers are highlighting various resources to help the public make mental health a priority for students and teachers during these unprecedented times. The Illinois Terrorism Task Force School Safety Working Group was created in 2018 to help improve safety in Illinois schools. Experts focus their efforts on providing practical and helpful recommendations for schools, including physical school improvements, policy suggestions, increasing mental health services and information sharing. Students who are contemplating hurting themselves or others frequently give warning signs of their distress, such as not acting like they normally do, a loss of interest in things they used to enjoy, talking about feelings of hopelessness, being more reckless or isolating from family and friends. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) recognizes that student wellbeing extends beyond learning and nutrition. To that end, the ISBE website features additional tools that can help provide care for mental/emotional wellbeing of our educators and our students. The Illinois Department of Human Services also has a help line for residents who need emotional support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Illinoisans can text "TALK" to 55-2020 (or "HABLAR" for Spanish) for

the Call4Calm service. The text line is free of charge and designed to support residents who are experiencing stress.

PENNSYLVANIA: *State launches mental health resource guide:* Pennsylvanians struggling with personal mental health or the health of a loved one can find help on the state's newly launched online Mental Health Resources Guide. Gov. Tom Wolf said the guide is a comprehensive rundown of mental health recovery services available in the state, including programs and specialists. Topics include treatment, preventing suicide, current events, coping with trauma, domestic and sexual violence and substance use disorders. There are also special sections for minority and LGBTQ communities, children and teens, service members and veterans. You can [access the guide here](#).

SOUTH CAROLINA: *New SC mental health hotline provides care for Spanish speakers:* South Carolina health care officials want to provide accessible care to the Latinx community with a new mental health and addiction support hotline. Tu Apoyo, which means your support in English, will provide mental health assistance for free over the phone in Spanish, thanks to the South Carolina Department of Mental Health and the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services. Operators will be available from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Friday for anyone who calls. Callers can remain anonymous and the number is toll-free in South Carolina. The number is 833-TU-APOYO (882-7696).

VIRGINIA: *MARCUS Alert Bill Progresses Out Of House Committee:* A bill that could reshape how law enforcement responds when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis reported out of the House Public Safety Committee on Tuesday by a vote of 13-9. House Bill 5043, introduced by Del. Jeff Bourne, D-Richmond, would create teams of mental health service providers, peer recovery specialists and law enforcement to help individuals in a crisis situation. Formally dubbed the mental health awareness response and community understanding services, or MARCUS, alert system, the proposal is in response to ongoing demands of protesters in Richmond.

EXECUTIVE

Department of Health and Human Services Releases \$1.5 Billion to States to Combat Opioid Crisis

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is distributing the first-year funds of its two-year State Opioid Response (SOR) and Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) grant programs
- The two programs ultimately will award nearly \$3 billion over two years to help states and tribes provide community-level resources for people in need of prevention, treatment and recovery support services
- You can view the allocations [here](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

De Beaumont Foundation and Well Being Trust Release Community Mental Health Policy Guide

- The nonprofit advocacy group de Beaumont Foundation and the Well Being Trust just released [a policy guide](#) for leaders looking to help their communities address mental health problems

- As more people report struggling with mental health in the wake of the pandemic, the comprehensive guide offers both short- and long-term recommendations
- Among the short-term recommendations is working to de-stigmatize mental health and to normalize the fact that people have been adversely affected by the pandemic
- The policy guide also includes strategies for particularly vulnerable groups, including frontline workers, older adults, and people of color

New JAMA Study Shows Internet Searches for Anxiety up 11% Since March

- A new JAMA study shows that internet searches for anxiety and panic attacks were up 11% — or an additional 375,000 searches — in the two months since a national emergency was declared in the U.S. in mid-March, compared to similar time frames going back to 2004
- Searches stayed at higher-than-usual levels through mid-April, which corresponded to when social distancing measures were first implemented, when the U.S. overtook China in the number of Covid-19 cases, and when U.S. deaths surpassed those in Italy
- You can view the study [here](#)

JAMA Study Shows 70% of Residential Treatment Programs Don't Have Opioid Addiction Standard of Care

- New JAMA report shows more than 70% of residential treatment programs in the U.S. don't offer the medical standard of care for opioid addiction
- The study showed the following:
 - Many facilities pushed clinically irrelevant therapies or outright discouraged widely accepted medication-based therapies
 - Researchers called 368 programs posing as uninsured heroin users asking for care options
 - Just 29% of facilities offered maintenance treatment with buprenorphine, while more than 20% discouraged the drug's use
 - 31% offered medication-assisted treatment, but only for short term "detox"
 - 92% offered some kind of 12-step programming. Many also offered group therapy
 - Many also offered yoga, animal therapy or massage — therapies with little to no basis in evidence
- You can view the report [here](#)

Urban Institute Report Shows Medicaid Naloxone Prescriptions Increased by 70% in Last Decade

- New Research from the Urban Institute shows prescriptions of the overdose-reversal drug naloxone increased by more than 70-fold in recent years
- Here's more from the study, which looked at prescriptions covered by Medicaid between 2010-2018:
 - There was a 71-fold increase in naloxone prescriptions, from around 3,300 in 2010 to more than 236,000 eight years later, with the most dramatic increase happening from 2016 onward

- Almost every prescription in 2010 was for generic naloxone, but it made up only 11% of prescriptions in 2018. In contrast, Narcan, the branded version of naloxone, made up the rest of 2018's prescriptions
 - Medicaid spending on naloxone products increased 136-fold during the study duration, going from \$110,000 in 2010 to nearly \$15 million in 2018, most notably for the Narcan nasal spray
- You can view the study [here](#)

WEEKEND READING

THE NEW YORK TIMES: The Extra Stigma of Mental Illness for African-Americans

FORBES: The Role Of Congress In Addressing The U.S. Mental Health Crisis

THE HUFFINGTON POST: Should I call the Police If I See Someone Having a Mental Health Crisis?

THE NEW YORK TIMES: Young Adults' Pandemic Mental Health Risks

THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY: Disasters Are Driving A Mental Health Crisis

CAL MATTERS: Pandemic tests an already-fragile college mental health system

FORBES: Upsurge In Depression And Suicide Among American Workers During The Pandemic And What Needs To Be Done

****The information compiled in this email originated from the following news sources: Axios, Modern Healthcare, Politico, Vox, STAT, CQ Roll Call, and The Hill****