



CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE NEWS

CARMEL, IN: *Budget Calls for City Hiring Mental Health Coordinator:* Carmel, IN Mayor Jim Brainard's FY21 budget calls for creating a new mental health coordinator position. The coordinator will be tasked with helping connect people who need mental health help to resources. "The police often are called on these issues," Brainard said during a budget workshop meeting this week. "Sometimes it gets better, generally they get called back in a few days. And there's a lot of frustration on the part of the police officers. They don't have the training, the expertise or the resources to really help the situation in the way it needs to be helped." Fire Chief David Haboush said right now people who have mental health issues may be detained in a hospital for a few days, but then go back to the same environment when they are released. A few days later police or fire personnel are often called to the same address. "What we're trying to do in this program," Haboush said, "is intervene and change that cycle." Brainard and Haboush want to get people to the right place. Although the position will be paid for through the Carmel Fire Department budget, any department, including the city's police department, can take advantage of the new position's expertise. The city is searching for someone with a background in psychology.

CONCORD, CA: *City To Move Ahead On Homelessness, Mental Health Teams:* In what they view as first steps in creating more comprehensive capability to respond to homelessness- and mental health-related calls for help, Concord City Council members on Tuesday approved moving ahead with establishing local teams to do that. The council voted unanimously to begin work to create its own Mental Health Evaluation Team to work full-time within Concord, and to expand the Coordinated Outreach Referral and Engagement (CORE) homeless outreach team from half-time to full-time. CORE teams serve as the main entry point into the county's programs to help the homeless. The CORE team that covers Concord and Walnut Creek was created in 2017; Concord officials want to expand the Concord side of that from half-time to full-time. The city will now approach Contra Costa County, which administers the CORE teams, about creating a Concord-only CORE team. Council members said they see these teams as providing more specialized responses to calls for which police alone are not always equipped to handle. Money to pay for these new programs -- about \$200,000 a year for the Mental Health Evaluation Team and doubling the CORE team cost from about \$100,000 to about \$200,000 -- hasn't been identified. Possible sources include revenue from Measure V, an extension and increase of a local sales tax on the Nov. 3 ballot, or from city reserve funds.

ROCHESTER, NY: *City announces new crisis unit for gun violence, mental health calls:* Rochester city officials announced an initiative to improve the community response to gun violence and health crises in Rochester. City Council Vice President Willie Lightfoot said he's been working on the crisis intervention services unit for a year and a half. This unit would be located in the former SUNY Brockport School of Social Work across from the transit center downtown. It would include two teams -- one for gun violence response, and one for mental health crises and domestic violence calls. And both would be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MA: *Berkshire County launches social-emotional learning program:* The Berkshire County District Attorney's Office, Department of Probation, and Pittsfield Public Schools are teaming up for a new program. The new program would provide additional social-emotional learning for families in the city's two community schools. The District Attorney's Office won a \$25,000 grant to start the early intervention

program. District Attorney Andrea Harrington says this program gives students and their families the skills to understand their emotions and reactions, and then make positive decisions when faced with challenges.

CENTRE COUNTY, PA: *Centre County DA Launches Mental Health Diversionary Initiative:* Centre County District Attorney Bernie Cantorna announced a new program designed to divert individuals with serious mental illness from the criminal justice system to community-based treatment services. “One of the things we need to do in the criminal justice system is address the underlying causes that bring someone into the system,” said Cantorna. “All too often, serious mental illness plays a role in individuals having police contact, arrests and incarceration.” In fact, Cantorna said, Warden Chris Schell reported that 60% of individuals incarcerated at the Centre County Correctional Facility in August received medications related to mental health issues. The goal of the new Behavioral and Mental Health Diversionary Initiative is to reduce police contact and recidivism for individuals with mental illness. The program has two tracks. In both, cases are reviewed by the DA's office and approved if criteria are met and public safety is ensured. For both tracks an individual must provide proof of a mental health diagnosis, agree to a treatment plan, comply with case management requirements, such as a prohibition on possession of firearms and non-prescribed drugs, and pay restitution. Track one is for primarily non-violent offenses, with an expected minimum treatment period of six months. In cases of co-occurring conditions, the treatment period is expected to be one to two years. The individual could then be accepted into the Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition, which allows for criminal charges to be dismissed if successfully completed. The second track is for crimes of a serious nature, which are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. It requires a guilty plea to negotiated charges. The individual must have been engaged in and in compliance with a mental health treatment plan for at least six months prior to the plea and must meet the program's 10 standard conditions. Individuals in track two may still face jail time, in-home detention or inpatient treatment.

FLORIDA: *First Lady Casey DeSantis announces expanded mental health services for students in rural counties:* First Lady Casey DeSantis announced during a mental health roundtable that the Florida Department of Education will issue grant funding to 18 rural Florida school districts to increase students' access to mental health and student support services and to enhance access to school and community-based providers. These funds are available through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and focus on supporting districts to improve access to school-based mental health services in areas where access to qualified professionals is limited. “Governor DeSantis and I are immensely proud that these funds will be available to support schools in their efforts to help students overcome barriers to achieving positive mental health wellness,” the First Lady said in a statement. “Our schools' leaders and educators have done a tremendous job preparing for a successful school year, and we are pleased to offer these grants, which will enable them to bolster existing infrastructure and staffing to meet their students' and families' ongoing needs.”

TENNESSEE: *School Mental Services Expands in Tennessee:* The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is expanding its mental health services for students and teachers to every county. Now, thanks to a 3 million dollar expansion approved by Governor Bill Lee, the McNabb Center will serve Bradley, McMinn, and Meigs' school districts. The mental health center focuses on the psychiatric support to both students and teachers. The challenges Covid-19 has given this school year, it's important to alleviate the stress therapeutically, “we also want to break down any barriers that anyone is experiencing and accessing care and support. So, by bringing the services to the school, they don't have to miss additional academic instruction time.”

EXECUTIVE

CDC Issues Three Reports on State of U.S Mental Health Focused on Anxiety, Depression, and Treatment

- Three new CDC reports focused on Anxiety, Depression, and Treatment outline the state of mental health among U.S. adults in 2019
- More than 1 in 7 U.S. adults experienced some level of anxiety during 2019 — before the pandemic while nearly 1 in 5 reported depression
- Here's more about these reports:
 - [Anxiety](#): When asked about their anxiety symptoms in the two weeks prior to being surveyed, nearly 10% of adults reported mild anxiety, while around 3% reported severe forms of anxiety. Women and those aged 18-29 were most likely to report being anxious
 - [Depression](#): Nearly 12% of respondents reported mild depression symptoms in the two weeks prior to being surveyed, while nearly 3% reported severe depression. White and Black adults were most likely to report depression than other racial groups
 - [Treatment](#): Around 1 in 5 U.S. adults reported getting any mental health treatment last year. Around 16% said they had taken some medication, while around 10% reporting getting counseling

SENATE

Senate Passes Veteran Mental Health Legislation

- The Senate, by unanimous consent, passed two veteran mental health measures this week and both measures now head to President Trump's desk:
 - H.R 1812, **Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act**, an act to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish Vet Center readjustment counseling and related mental health services to certain individuals
 - H.R 2372, **Veterans' Care Quality Transparency Act**, an act to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct an assessment of all memoranda of understanding and memoranda of agreement between Under Secretary of Health and non-Department of Veterans Affairs entities relating to suicide prevention and mental health services

Sen. Michael Bennet (CO) and Sen. Susan Collins Introduce Bill on Training for Opioid Prescribers

- Sens. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) introduced a bipartisan bill to boost education about addiction medicine
- Under the *Medication Access and Training Expansion Act*, prescribers of federally controlled substances would be required to complete a training on how to treat and manage patients with opioid and other substance use disorders, among other provisions

- Reps. Lori Trahan (MA) and Rep. Jack Bergman (MI) have introduced a corresponding bill in the House

HOUSE

House of Representatives Passes a Package of Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Opioid Overdose Prevention

- H.R. 1646, the **Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Act of 2019** or the “HERO Act of 2019,” was introduced by Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA). The legislation would create a data system at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to capture public safety officer suicide incidences and study successful interventions, authorize grants for peer support behavioral health and wellness programs within fire departments and emergency medical service agencies, and require the development of best practices for addressing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in public safety officers and educational materials
- H.R. 4564, the **Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act of 2019**, was introduced by Reps. John Katko (R-NY), Don Beyer (D-VA) and Grace Napolitano (D-CA). The legislation would increase the authorization funding level of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline program to \$50 million each year, from Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 through FY 2022. The bill also directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a plan for maintaining the program and includes a pilot program to research, analyze and employ various innovative technologies and platforms for suicide prevention
- H.R. 4585, the **Campaign to Prevent Suicide Act**, was introduced by Reps. Beyer and Greg Gianforte (R-MT). The legislation would direct HHS, in coordination with CDC and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to carry out a national suicide prevention media campaign to advertise the new 9-8-8 number, when it becomes effective, raise awareness for suicide prevention resources, and cultivate a more effective discourse on how to prevent suicide. The bill would also provide guidance to TV and social media companies on how to talk about suicide by creating a best practices toolkit
- H.R. 5619, the **Suicide Prevention Act**, was introduced by Reps. Chris Stewart (R-UT) and Doris Matsui (D-CA). The legislation would establish two grant programs to prevent self-harm and suicide. The first program would authorize CDC to award grants to State, local, and Tribal health departments to expand surveillance of self-harm and the second program would authorize SAMHSA to award grants to hospital emergency departments for programs to prevent self-harm and suicide attempts among patients after discharge
- S. 2661, the **National Suicide Hotline Designation Act**, a companion to the House legislation led by Reps. Stewart (R-UT) and Seth Moulton (D-MA), amends the Communications Act to designate 9-8-8 as the universal dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, allows states to impose a fee to support implementation, and requires a report on ways to help LGBTQ populations, among other things
- S. 785, **The Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act**, This bill will help transitioning and former service members access better care and advance research into mental health conditions. This legislation will: Provide wraparound suicide prevention services through veteran-serving community organizations, increase accountability of mental health and suicide prevention programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), help rural veterans by expanding VA

telehealth care, and boost research, including creating a Precision Medicine for Veterans Initiative to identify biomarkers for mental health conditions

- HR. 8247, **The Veterans COMPACT Act**, this bill is a combination of nine measures, one of which would order the VA to provide free care to all veterans who are in mental health crises, create an education program for families and caregivers of veterans with mental health problems, and it requires the VA police force to undergo de-escalation and crisis-intervention training, and order the department to study how and where women are using the VA and how much assistance the agency is providing to homeless female veterans.

IN OTHER NEWS

de Beaumont Foundation and Well Being Trust Releases Mental Health Roadmap For City Leaders

- The [de Beaumont Foundation](#) and [Well Being Trust](#)— released an action guide that gives city leaders a clear roadmap for addressing mental health challenges
- The guide titled, [Supporting a Nation in Crisis: Solutions for Local Leaders to Improve Mental Health and Well-Being During and Post-COVID-19](#), curates actions that are needed right now and over the long-term recovery from the pandemic, many of which are low cost or revenue neutral and do not require explicit support from federal and state partners
- The authors say “although a comprehensive approach to mental health and substance use that engages all levels of government is ideal, local leaders cannot wait for federal or state direction. There are actions we can take now, such as bolstering the local workforce to address mental health, reducing the stigma around mental health, and augmenting the [social safety net](#) (the set of programs that protect Americans in hard times, such as housing assistance programs and school lunch programs for families living in poverty). And over the long term, actions such as ensuring safe, affordable housing and equitable access to green space will improve the vital community conditions for well-being for everyone in the US”
- Read the full guide [here](#)

The Steve Fund Releases Report on Improving the Mental Health of Students of Color

- A task force formed by The Steve Fund — a nonprofit focused on the mental health of youth of color — recently released a report that advises colleges and employers on how best to help students of color with mental health issues in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a struggling economy and ongoing racial strife
- The Steve Fund Crisis Response Task Force is composed of 21 members, including students, mental health experts, higher education administrators, corporation executives and nonprofit leaders
- Some of the task force recommendations include:
 - That colleges and universities pay particular attention to racial trauma
 - Encourage interdepartmental collaboration, partnering with local communities and businesses and keeping mental health funding a priority, even during periods of financial hardship

- Employers should ease the transition from college to the workplace, training leaders to discuss matters of diversity and mental health and reviewing company practices and culture to account for today's stressors and inequities
- You can view the report [here](#)

New Study Shows Older Trans Teens Seeking Gender-Affirming Care Have More Mental Health Concerns

- A new study shows that teens who seek gender-affirming care when they're older than 15 tend to also have more mental health concerns than those who seek care at a younger age
- Of 300 youth who were included in a new study, 46% of those who sought care for their gender dysphoria at age 15 or older reported depression, compared to 30% of those who sought care when they were younger than 15
- A higher proportion of the older youth also reported self-harm, suicide ideation or attempts, and taking psychoactive medication than younger youth.
- Transgender youth are already a vulnerable population, and the study's findings suggest that older trans youth may be a particularly high-risk subset of the trans population
- You can view the study [here](#)

WEEKEND READING

THE HILL: Now's the time to make 'Social Emotional Learning' a national priority

HEALTH AFFAIRS BLOG: City Officials Must Act Now To Prevent A Devastating Mental Health Crisis

TIME: The Coronavirus Pandemic's Outsized Effect on Women's Mental Health Around the World

STAT NEWS: America's mental health care system fell short for my brother. Access to that care should be a legal right for all

BUZZFEED: Lady Gaga Opened Up About Her Struggles With Mental Health And It's Heartbreaking But Honest

USA TODAY: Lady Gaga and her mother offer candid advice for opening up about mental health to parents

MEDIUM: The Mental Health Struggle of America's Black Teachers

The information in this e-mail was compiled from various news sources including: Axios, CQ Roll Call, The Hill, Modern Healthcare, STAT, Kaiser Health News, Politico, and Vox