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**Subject:** Mental Health and COVID-19 - Resources and Guidance for State and Local Leaders



State and Local Leaders,

President Donald J. Trump is committed to providing Americans with the unprecedented mental health resources they need during this challenging time. On Thursday, April 9, President Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, First Lady Melania Trump, and Second Lady Karen Pence spoke by telephone with hundreds of American mental health professionals, leaders, and advocates to discuss the effects COVID-19 is having on the American people. This COVID-19 call was the first to bring these four influential leaders together on one issue. The President recognized that a great number of Americans are enduring hardships – including loneliness from social distancing, despair from being out of work, anxiety from the danger of the virus, and grief from the loss of a loved one. President Trump thanked the doctors, counselors, and many other mental health professionals for providing vital mental health services during this time through tele-health.

### **U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams PSA – Mental Health**



The White House and Administration are committed to providing Americans with vital mental health resources and services especially through expanding telehealth services, continuing the Administration's efforts to combat drug demand and the opioid crisis. Below, please find additional information and resources. Attached, also find a helpful Fact Sheet from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) outlining efforts and resources to ensure

that prevention, treatment, recovery support services, and safe and effective pain management remain available nationwide. We also want to share examples of State and Local leaders addressing mental health needs in their communities and welcome awareness and engagement around your efforts.

Sincerely,

**The White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs**

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## STATE AND LOCAL COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

*Below are examples of State and Local leaders promoting mental health awareness and resources aid the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome awareness over your own respective initiatives.*

**Ohio Governor DeWine** [urged support groups](#) to check in with people with serious mental illness or addiction and highlighted the need to get the suicide hotline sent out to more people.

**Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo** [offered resources](#) to those struggling with mental health during this time.

**Tennessee Governor Bill Lee** [addressed](#) the collateral impact on mental health that COVID-19 takes and highlighted the state's crisis hotline while working with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to expand telehealth access.

**Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb** [said](#) that mental health crisis calls are increasing and will issue guidance for Hoosiers on the tools available to help them out with mental health issues and will increase staffing at these centers.

**Minnesota Governor Tim Walz** [signed](#) an Executive order expanding mental health counseling options for Minnesotans. Specifically, the Executive Order authorized out-of-state mental health providers to treat Minnesota patients via telehealth services

**Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker** [announced](#) the launch of a new Remote Patient Monitoring Program and mental health support line. Call4Calm, operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services' Mental Health Division, is a free-of-charge emotional support text line for Illinois residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19.

**The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services** [launched](#) a warmline to help Michiganders with persistent mental health issues amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The peer-operated warmline is intended to act as a resource for people experiencing depression, anxiety, or other mental illnesses.

**The Texas Health & Human Services Commission** [established](#) a hotline and texting service on Mental Health.

**San Diego, California Mayor Kevin Faulconer** and **San Diego County Supervisors** [announced](#) a \$25 Million partnership for a Behavioral Health Fund dedicated to assessment, treatment, detoxification, crisis stabilization, residential treatment and supportive housing.

**San Jose, California Mayor Sam Liccardo** hosted a [Facebook Live](#) session on mental health during the coronavirus crisis.

**The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH)**, the largest county mental health department in the United States, has scaled resources and provided coronavirus-specific guidance for individuals during the pandemic. More [here](#).

In **Coconino County, Arizona**, the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Liaisons [distributed](#) Mental Health resource listing (including crisis line) to numerous.

**Pima County, Arizona** worked with SoAZ NAMI ([National Alliance for Mental Illness](#)) to put their "Ending the Silence" online, and to market it to local schools, public (traditional and charter) and private. Ending the Silence is a National Program, usually taught in person to Middle and High School Students

In **Arapahoe County, Colorado**, Aurora Mental Health continues to [provide](#) all core services. Crisis, withdrawal management (detox), and residential services are face-to-face, and all other services have transitioned to phone (allowed in Colorado for indigent and Medicaid clients) and telehealth.

In **Tennessee, Shelby County** is [offering](#) free teletherapy services to all county employees.

In **Indiana, Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen** held a [Facebook Live](#) with a licensed therapist in his city to discuss tips on how families and individuals can care for their mental health.

In **Georgia, Athens-Clarke County Mayor Kelly Girtz** gave a brief [video update](#) on the County's response to COVID-19 and highlighted mental health considerations & shelter-in-place orders.

In **Georgia, the DeKalb Community Service Board (CSB)** has gone to telehealth services for clients that wish to maintain social isolation while accessing mental health services. The CSB pharmacy services have arranged for same-day delivery of medication refill to their homes for all clients using telehealth access. More information [here](#).

In **Florida, Tallahassee Mayor John Dailey** [led a discussion](#) about anxiety and new routines citizens can take to keep up on their mental health.

**DuPage County, Illinois** [established](#) an on-site 12 bed crisis residential program that remains open and available to community members who are having a mental health crisis and not in need of an inpatient level of care as well as implementation of a health screening for anyone in need.

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## FEDERAL RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE



The graphic is a rectangular box with a light gray background and a dark gray border. At the top, the text "Disaster Distress Helpline" is written in a large, dark blue, serif font. Below this, there are three rows of information, each preceded by a red circular icon. The first row has a telephone icon and the text "1-800-985-5990". The second row has a speech bubble icon and the text "TEXT: 'TalkWithUs' to 66746". The third row has a laptop icon and the text "DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov". At the bottom left of the box is the SAMHSA logo, and at the bottom right is the HHS.gov logo.

**Disaster Distress Helpline**

 **1-800-985-5990**

 **TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746**

 **DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov**

SAMHSA HHS.gov

### Resources and Initiatives

- **Telehealth:** Under the President’s leadership and at the direction of the White House Task Force, the Trump Administration has taken historic steps to expand Americans’ access to telehealth, so that patients, particularly our Medicare beneficiaries, can receive a wider range of services without having to travel to a healthcare facility (*read more from Surgeon General Jerome Adams and CMS Administrator Seema Verma – [Telehealth Plays Big Role in Coronavirus Cure](#)*). States are also examining their own policies to determine if there are undue barriers to maximizing telehealth service delivery for their residents in this time of national emergency. States have broad authority to deliver and reimburse Medicaid covered services through telehealth modalities, and additional federal approval is often not required to do so. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued guidance on telehealth reimbursement and coverage options in the Medicaid program [here](#).
- **Supplemental Grant Funding:** On April 3, SAMHSA announced it will fund \$110 million in emergency grants to provide treatment for substance use disorders/serious mental illness during the coronavirus pandemic. The grants are available to State governments, the District of Columbia, Territories, and Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes. As the Trump administration responds to meet the needs of Americans affected by the coronavirus pandemic, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is announcing emergency grants to help Americans dealing with substance use disorders and/or serious mental illness. The agency has announced it is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2020 Emergency Grants to Address Mental and Substance Use Disorders During COVID-19 (Short Title: Emergency COVID-19). The grants total \$110 million and will provide up to \$2 million for successful state applicants and up to \$500,000 for successful territory and tribal applicants for 16 months. More details [here](#).
- **Move Your Way Campaign:** *Move Your Way* is a physical activity campaign from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promote the recommendations from the

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The Move Your Way tools, videos, and fact sheets on this page have tips that make it easier to get a little more active. And small changes can add up to big health benefits! Learn more [here](#).

- **Office of National Drug Control Policy – COVID-19 Fact Sheet:** During the COVID-19 crisis, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is leading efforts to ensure that prevention, treatment, recovery support services, and safe and effective pain management remain available nationwide. The Trump Administration is mobilizing the Federal Government to ensure the approximately 20 million Americans who struggle with the disease of addiction can access and continue to receive treatment and recovery support services, while keeping themselves and healthcare professionals safe from unnecessary exposure to COVID-19. *See attached.*
- **The President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS):** On Friday, April 3, Second Lady Karen Pence announced her new role as lead ambassador for PREVENTS on behalf of the White House Coronavirus Task Force (*see [Second Lady Karen Pence Taking Lead Role in Suicide Prevention Initiative During Coronavirus Outbreak](#)*). PREVENTS focuses on a holistic public health approach to ending Veteran suicide. The Initiative seeks to change the culture surrounding mental health and suicide prevention through enhanced community integration, prioritized research activities, and implementation strategies that emphasize improved overall health and well-being. The goal of PREVENTS is to prevent suicide — among not just Veterans but all Americans. By adopting a holistic public health approach, PREVENTS is acting on the knowledge that suicide prevention is everyone’s business, and that by working together, locally and nationally, we can prevent suicide. Learn more [here](#).

## Guidance

- **Managing & Recognizing Stress:** The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. [Sharing the facts](#) about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stressed and allow you to connect with them. Learn more about [taking care of your emotional health](#). Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)
- **Guidance for Parents and Caregivers:** Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared. There are many things you can do to support your child: Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and [share facts](#) about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand. Learn more about [helping children cope](#).
- **Guidance for Responders and Providers:** Responding to COVID-19 can take an emotional toll on you. There are things you can do to reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions: Acknowledge that STS can impact anyone helping families after a traumatic event; and learn the symptoms including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear,

withdrawal, guilt) Learn more [tips for taking care of yourself](#) during emergency response.

- **Guidance for Persons Released from Quarantine:** Being separated from others if a healthcare provider thinks you may have been exposed to COVID-19 can be stressful, even if you do not get sick. Everyone feels differently after coming out of quarantine. Some feelings include: Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious; and guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine. Children may also feel upset or have other strong emotions if they, or someone they know, has been released from quarantine. [You can help your child cope.](#)
- **Digital Mental Health – Innovating in a Time of High Anxiety:** In this time of [increased anxiety and physical distancing](#) due to the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#), many people are looking for digital technology solutions to help them manage their mental health. Mental health apps are one of the fastest-growing sectors of the digital marketplace, with more than 10,000 apps available. These apps claim to, among other things, boost your mood, increase your sleep, and even help you manage your addiction. The National Institute of Mental Health takes a look [here](#).
- **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Resource – How To Manage Stress and Anxiety During the COVID-19 Outbreak:** Taking care of your well-being, including your mental health, is essential during this time. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Many people may experience stress, fear, anxiety, or feelings of depression. This is normal. There are things that you can do to manage your stress and anxiety. VA has provided resources [here](#).