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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW INVESTMENTS IN MENTAL HEALTH

2019 budget investments will help better connect residents to existing mental services across the city, bridge gaps in emergency mental health care

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Dr. Julie Morita today announced a \$1.4 million investment in the 2019 budget to strengthen bridges between residents and critical mental health services within their communities. The investments will better connect residents to mental health service providers, expand the city's capacity for emergency psychiatric care and support coordinated mental health community responses following traumatic events. This budget proposal builds on mental health improvements and is aimed at filling remaining gaps in Chicago's larger mental health infrastructure.

Today, more than 6,000 residents receive mental health services from CDPH and the department's four health center partners – roughly 1,000 more residents served than in 2011. These investments build on the gains made over the past six years and expand the capacity of community-based services throughout the city.

"Over the past several years we have strengthened Chicago's mental health system, and today there are more than 250 facilities across our city ready to serve," said Mayor Emanuel. "Through these investments we will provide better access to the quality mental health services available in every community"

Connecting Residents to Community Mental Health Services: The Mayor's 2019 budget proposal makes an investment in the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) Chicago Helpline to expand services to include nights and weekends, provide additional language options and connect the Helpline directly to the City's 311 system. The free Helpline connects callers to trained operators who can provide immediate mental health triage over the phone, answer questions regarding mental health concerns and connect residents to a qualified, affordable service provider that best fits their individual needs. The investment and direct-link to 311 will allow the NAMI Helpline to expand its capacity and is expected to connect more than 15,000 residents/year to neighborhood mental health supports.

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“Access to treatment for mental health and substance use disorders is more important than ever, as our country continues to face skyrocketing rates of suicides and overdoses,” said Patrick J. Kennedy, former U.S. Representative, mental health advocate and founder of the Kennedy Forum. By taking meaningful steps to connect residents with much-needed care, Chicago is setting an example of how cities can and should respond. Boosting mental health services will empower individuals, support families, and strengthen communities.”

Expanding Capacity for Emergency Psychiatric Care: As part of the Mayor’s 2019 budget, for the first time, CDPH will offer walk-in psychiatric services. The investment will expand the capacity of existing mental health service sites to provide additional walk-in crisis therapy and psychiatry care for residents, including those who may be uninsured. These sites will support high-need communities and provide same-date psychiatric care and therapy for residents in immediate need of mental health services. Partner sites will be determined through a competitive bid process, focused on those high-need communities. The new partnerships are expected to serve 2,100 individuals/year, increasing citywide capacity by 16 percent.

“By helping residents get the care they need from providers working in the community, we will not only improve individual mental health but we will build a healthier Chicago for generations to come,” said Dr. Morita.

“By connecting the reach of Chicago’s 311 system and the expansion of our helpline at NAMI Chicago, we have a meaningful path to get the help and support that everyone deserves. The dedicated people staffing the helpline provide support and information to help connect people to mental health resources so they and their loved ones can get tools to live in recovery. The City of Chicago and the Chicago Department of Public Health show great leadership in supporting this expansion,” said Alexa James, Executive Director of NAMI Chicago.

Coordinating Post-Trauma Mental Health Community Response: The Mayor’s budget also invests in mental health triage and rapid response services following traumatic events or violent events. CDPH will work with established community-based providers to manage a coordinated and timely response when tragedy strikes, ensuring residents in need are connected to quality care. This program is expected to serve 1,000 residents per year.

“As a former social worker who specialized in mental health, I recognize whether facing a crisis or dealing with everyday challenges, every Chicagoan should have the opportunity to get mental health care,” said James Cappleman, 46th Ward Alderman. “I am proud to support Mayor Emanuel’s 2019 plan to connect residents to existing services and ensure residents facing crises have more options for care.”

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, more than 90 percent of Chicago residents are insured, providing more opportunities for more residents to access quality mental health services. The Mayor's most recent proposals build on other investments CDPH makes in community partners, expanding outreach and access to Chicagoans who continue to face challenges accessing mental health services.

- CDPH works with local agencies to engage both residents who are undocumented and residents facing homelessness in care. In the first half of this year, 453 residents received mental health services through these partnerships.
- Residents returning home from Cook County Jail and facing mental health challenges are linked directly to a mental health provider. In the first six months of this year, 90 individuals received discharge planning services and completed at least one mental health appointment. The program has seen an 8percent reduction in recidivism among participants.
- CDPH invests in five community-based mental health providers on the city's South and West Sides to provide psychiatry services to adults facing severe mental illness who have limited options for care. More than 800 adults received services during the first half of this year.
- Through a partnership with the Kennedy Forum, the city has supported free mental health awareness training to reduce stigma and better access critical mental health emergency response resources. Since the program launched last year, more than 800 community members in Austin, Garfield Park, North Lawndale and Roseland have received training, with more than 400 additional Roseland residents scheduled for trainings in the coming weeks.

City Council is expected to vote on the new proposals as part of the Mayor's 2019 budget package in November.

Mental health advocates praised the investments as an important step to build bridges to care and serve more residents.

"I applaud Mayor Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Public Health for increasing the city's investment in connecting people to care. There are services available, from national academic hospitals like Rush which recently has made a substantial investment in building a community behavioral health infrastructure to community-based federally qualified health centers that have been at the front lines of behavioral health delivery. But unless people know about those services and are connected to them, there is no way we can improve community mental health," said **David Ansell, Sr. Vice President for Community Health and Rush University Medical Center.**

"As a community-based provider, we know one of the greatest challenges is reaching residents in need. We appreciate that CDPH and the City of Chicago recognize this same

challenge and are building new bridges between service providers and communities,” said **Verneda Bachus, CEO of Friend Family Health Center.**

“As a city, we have made tremendous progress in making more mental health services available. But we know gaps remain. By investing in new ways to connect residents to care, expanding psychiatric services in communities facing the greatest need and by coordinating community responses to traumatic events, we will be able to build even greater progress helping those most in need,” said **Ric Estrada, CEO of Metropolitan Family Services.**

“Esperanza offers mental health services in Little Village thanks to a partnership with CDPH. We will open a new health center in Brighton Park soon, further expanding options for West Side residents. Even still, we all need to do more to connect residents in need to care culturally competent in their community. Thanks to this new investment, I believe we will do our work even better,” said **Dan Fulwiler, CEO of Esperanza Health Centers.**

“Thresholds applauds Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Public Health for making this investment to help connect residents to the mental health services they need. This is an important step towards strengthening the city’s mental health infrastructure, and we look forward to working together as we continue to build bridges between providers and clients,” said **Mark Ishaug, CEO of Thresholds.**

“Though we still have gaps to fill, Chicago has made real progress these past several years, helping ensure more service options are available for more people. These new investments will help connect even more people, especially African American and Latino residents who face especially high burdens to accessing care,” said **Joel Johnson, President, HRDI, A Subsidiary of Friend Family Health Center and Chairman of the Behavioral Health Consortium of Illinois, LLC.**

“Chicago’s 311 System is designed to connect residents to the various services and resources they need. By partnering with NAMI’s trained operators, we are taking our service delivery one step further by being able to connect residents around the clock to mental health and support services across Chicago,” said **General Alicia Tate-Nadeau, Director of City of Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications.**

“Health disparities exist for an assortment of reasons – including a lack of information and accessibility in African American and Latino communities. By closing this gap, Chicago is not just connecting people to services, but investing in communities for their long-term health and growth,” said **Dr. Robert A. Winn, Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Based Practice University of Illinois, Chicago.**

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