

HOPE.
RECOVERY.
RESILIENCE.

OMH NEWS



Office of
Mental Health

ANN SULLIVAN, MD / Commissioner
Fall 2022



A few of the online sessions that were a part of the Suicide Prevention Conference.

Suicide prevention: Raising public awareness

Suicide prevention continues to be a major focus of OMH's agenda as it closes out the year.

OMH's Suicide Prevention Center hosted "**Fostering Connection Across the Lifespan,**" the 2022 New York State Suicide Prevention Conference, which brought together internationally recognized experts to discuss the latest in suicide prevention science.

More than 1,100 New Yorkers attended the virtual event, held September 20 to 22, where they heard from a diverse group of speakers, including clinicians, researchers, service providers, and individuals with lived experience.

"The theme for this year's conference spoke to the importance of social connections and the experience of having a sense of belonging and feeling close to others," said **OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan**. "Studies show this sense of connection – from childhood and throughout our entire lives - is one of the most important factors in not just mental health but also our physical health."

The conference provided new and valuable suicide prevention resources for participants to bring back to their families, organizations, schools, and communities. Since 2021, more than 71,566 New Yorkers have received suicide-specific training funded by OMH and delivered to community members, healthcare providers, school staff, and students throughout the state.



Illuminating state landmarks and bridges

These state bridges and landmarks were lit in purple and teal - the colors of suicide prevention - on September 9 and 10:

- Albany International Airport Gateway
- Alfred E. Smith State Office Building
- Empire State Plaza
- Fairport Lift Bridge over the Erie Canal
- Franklin D. Roosevelt Mid-Hudson Bridge
- Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge
- Grand Central Station - Pershing Square Viaduct
- H. Carl McCall SUNY Administration Building
- Kosciuszko Bridge
- MTA LIRR - East End Gateway at Penn Station
- Niagara Falls
- One World Trade Center
- State Education Building
- State Fairgrounds, Main Gate and Expo Center

Public outreach campaigns

September as National Suicide Prevention Month, **Governor Kathy Hochul** introduced a digital public service campaign and other statewide initiatives to raise awareness of suicide prevention efforts and available mental health resources. The digital campaign is running through November, promoting these services on many social media platforms, including YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat.

To help all New Yorkers experiencing a mental health crisis, New York State successfully implemented **988 Suicide Prevention Lifeline** in July. The three-digit number can be called or texted by anyone with a New York area code to reach a trained counselor from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Governor Hochul's 2023 fiscal year Enacted Budget included \$35 million to significantly expand crisis call center capacity, with this funding to increase to \$60 million starting in the 2024 fiscal year.

Supporting children and schools

OMH has been working extensively with schools and communities to identify and better engage with at-risk youth and provide hope and support. OMH has licensed more than **1,000 school-based satellite clinics** throughout New York State, to address the mental health needs of children and improve the learning environment. To help grow and strengthen school-based mental services, OMH provided \$3.4 million in funding for 136 satellite locations in 2022 and issued \$10 million in awards over five years to help 26 schools in high-needs districts develop and implement comprehensive prevention and mental health plans.

The Suicide Prevention Center has been offering a comprehensive list of **school suicide prevention trainings** to professionals with various roles in the school community. This helped train more than 5,000 school professionals last year on subjects such as suicide safety training for teachers and helping students at risk for suicide.

OMH also awarded \$2.5 million to the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. to fund the **Mental Health Resource and Training Technical Assistance Center**. This center assists New York State schools by informing the content and incorporation of mental health in K-12 health curriculum, which helps to expand the knowledge and competencies of educational staff specific to mental health through the provision of technical assistance, training, and a variety of other strategies.

The agency also designed the evidence-based **Youth Assertive Community Treatment** teams to assist children with significant psychiatric needs who are at risk of institutional level of care and require intensive interventions. OMH is in the process of developing 20 teams statewide, covering 29 counties and serving approximately 835 children and their families.



You can find OMH's 988 website at:
<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/crisis/988.html>



For information on training opportunities designed to meet the suicide prevention needs of school staff and community members, visit:

<https://www.preventsuicideny.org/training-options/>

Reaching out:

Sawubona Healing Circles offer culturally specialized care

This year, OMH has made available \$5 million for suicide prevention programs for underserved populations, including Hispanic/Latino, African American, Asian American, Native American, and LGBTQ+ youth and young adults. This funding supports Governor Hochul's commitment to provide needed support to vulnerable and historically underserved New Yorkers.

OMH has begun a partnership with the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi), Inc. to provide specialized "healing circle" support groups for individuals and families traumatized by the racially-motivated mass shooting in Buffalo earlier this year and increased incidents of hate crimes in general.

Virtual support groups, known as **Sawubona Healing Circles**, provide assistance and support to individuals and families dealing with elevated levels of grief, anxiety, and trauma.

"Sawubona" is a Zulu word that means "I see you." Sawubona Healing Circles are a culturally grounded rapid response intervention model designed to provide coping and wellness strategies in an affirming space for Black people experiencing race-related stress and trauma.

The Black-led healing circles, which are non-clinical, provide culturally relevant ways for people to express thoughts, feelings, and stories in a healing way. Culturally grounded in African-centered practices, the model helps address racial and other forms of trauma in communities of color.

Donell L. Barnett, PhD, President of the Association of Black Psychologists, said, "This is uniquely important given the racial trauma and other challenges the country has taken notice of recently and historically. At a time of increased demand for services and a shortage of mental health providers, having culturally appropriate and culturally accountable services as a part of the array of mental health and wellness services is critically important."

To help this effort grow, OMH is looking for New York State residents interested in becoming trained Sawubona Healing Circle facilitators. This is a perfect opportunity for volunteers, retirees, students, advocates, and mental health service providers interested in supporting resilience in the Black community.



To attend a Sawubona healing circle, please sign up at: <https://abpsi.site-ym.com/general/?type=BSHCA>.

If you're interested in free Sawubona training, go to: <https://abpsi.site-ym.com/general/?type=bshcf>.

Families Thrive With Good Mental Health

Supporting maternal health and pediatric clinicians to deliver quality mental health care in New York State.

GET INVOLVED



Project TEACH:

New affiliation to bring expansion

Project TEACH website:
<https://projectteachny.org>

OMH is collaborating with top universities and hospitals in the state to expand access to its Project TEACH (Training and Education for the Advancement of Children's Health) – an innovative program that has helped New York's pediatric primary care providers deliver care to children and families experiencing mild-to-moderate mental health concerns.

Partnering with OMH in the project is **University Psychiatric Practice (UPP)**, a collaboration led by the University at Buffalo Department of Psychiatry, which includes faculty psychiatrists from the University of Rochester, Columbia University, New York State Psychiatric Institute, SUNY Upstate, Zucker School of Medicine/Northwell Health, Albany Medical Center, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

"Pediatricians and family practice doctors are often the first place families go to seek help or information if they have concerns about their children's emotional or behavioral health," said Commissioner Sullivan. "Project TEACH connects pediatric primary care providers with psychiatrists and other behavioral healthcare experts for consultation, referrals to services and education, and training on children's social and emotional development."

"The pandemic turned the shortage of mental health providers into a national crisis, and it has hit children and new mothers particularly hard," added **Dr. David L. Kaye**, Professor of Psychiatry at the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and the Executive Director of Project TEACH. "Project TEACH brings mental health treatment for these vulnerable populations to every corner of New York State by bolstering the skill sets of the health care professionals these patients already know and trust."

Under the new contract, UPP will take several steps to help expand and strengthen Project TEACH, including:

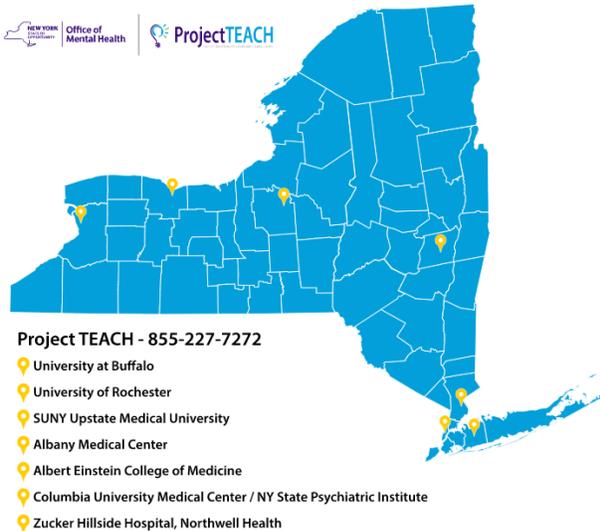
- Expanding **delivery of consultations** to pediatric providers to include the specialty areas of infants and children ages 0 to 5; behavioral assessment and planning for autism spectrum disorders/intellectual developmental disorders; non-medication intervention for substance use disorder; LGBTQ+ wellness and mental health concerns; and problematic sexual behavior assessment and treatment.

Get Involved

It is easy to use Project TEACH services.

Talk to a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist or a Reproductive Psychiatrist within 30 minutes. Simply call 855-227-7272.

For general questions about the program email info@projectteachny.org and we will respond within two business days.



- Expanding the **Maternal Mental Health Initiative** by providing maternal health providers with access to consultation via a warmline operated 40 hours per week.
- Increasing the number and type of **in-person and on-line trainings** available to primary care physicians.
- Creating **toolkits** on pediatric mental health and maternal mental health, both of which will be available through the Project TEACH website.
- Creating additional downloadable **educational materials** for parents and families that are available in seven languages.

OMH launched Project TEACH in 2010 to help pediatric primary care providers to ask questions about any of their cases involving children and adolescents. Questions can be specific to a particular patient; diagnosis and treatment for a specific mental health disorder; use of a particular medication or other treatment strategy; or general questions about topics in child psychiatry or behavioral health.

Project TEACH provides:

- Access to **rapid consultation** from child and adolescent psychiatrists and from reproductive psychiatrists. All New York State pediatric primary care physicians and maternal health providers are eligible to receive telephone consultation about their patients' mental health needs. Pediatric primary care providers can also obtain direct consultation for their patients, either face-to-face with the child psychiatrist or via videoconference. Other prescribers who are providing ongoing treatment to children, such as child and adolescent psychiatrists, general psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurse practitioners, may request a second opinion through consultation.
- Access to **education and training**. Educational-based trainings for pediatric and maternal health providers are held regularly on-line and on a virtual platform. Pediatric primary care providers may also access training on-site at their offices on a variety of topics related to children's social and emotional development. CME credits are available to physicians who attend training.
- Access to **referral and linkage services** for their child and adolescent patients. Referral and linkage services are available to both pediatric primary care providers and maternal mental health providers to help their patients access community mental health and support services, such as clinic treatment, case management, or family support.

Housing:

ESSHI provides funding throughout the state

The seventh round of funding through the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) will provide \$35 million for supportive services for affordable housing projects statewide.

ESSHI provides operating funding for supportive service providers serving homeless veterans and their families; victims of domestic violence; seniors or frail elderly; young adults with a history of incarceration, homelessness, or foster care; chronically homeless individuals and families; individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities; individuals reentering the community from prison; and those living with HIV or AIDS, serious mental illness, or substance use disorders.

Announced this summer by Governor Hochul, the funds will cover operating expenses for 1,400 units of permanent supportive housing that will help reduce housing instability among vulnerable populations in New York. "Supportive housing is a critical component of our efforts to build inclusive communities and ensure all New Yorkers have a safe, affordable place to call home," she said. "This funding will be critical to addressing the root causes of housing instability and uplifting our most vulnerable and marginalized populations."

OMH – the lead procurement agency for the initiative – has already issued a request for proposals. Funding is dispersed by an interagency workgroup of eight state agencies. Projects may receive up to \$25,000 per-unit, per-year for service and operating funding needed to operate permanent supportive housing units. Applicants are expected to secure separate capital funding to finance the development and construction of their housing project.

Funding awarded through the initiative may be used for rental assistance and services to eligible target populations to ensure their housing stability:

- Rental subsidies and other occupancy costs; or services or staff to identify and locate eligible individuals that need housing.
- Primary and behavioral health services.
- Employment and vocational training.
- Educational assistance, parenting skills development, and support.
- Child-care assistance counseling and crisis intervention; and children's services, including educational advocacy, support, and counseling.
- Costs associated with services that help individuals and families remain stably housed.

"The ESSHI program, and Governor Hochul's commitment to supportive housing, have provided new opportunities to thousands of vulnerable individuals and families," said Commissioner Sullivan. "Supportive housing is a powerful resource that helps people live productive, successful and fulfilling lives in their own homes and their own communities."



Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative

In the 2023 fiscal year State Budget, Governor Hochul successfully secured \$25 billion, for a five-year, comprehensive housing plan that will increase the housing supply by creating or preserving 100,000 affordable homes across New York, including 10,000 with support services for vulnerable populations, plus the electrification of an additional 50,000 homes.

Other projects for which ESSHI has played a role include:



Commissioner Sullivan, fifth from the right, at the Baez Place groundbreaking.

Baez Place, Bronx

Construction is under way for Baez Place, an \$86-million affordable housing development in the Claremont section of the Bronx. Baez Place will feature 154 affordable homes, including 86 with on-site support services for people experiencing homelessness. The project consists of 105 studio, 21 one-bedroom, 22 two-bedroom, and six three-bedroom apartments. The apartments will be affordable to households with incomes between 30 and 80 percent of the area median income.

Supportive services and rental subsidies will be funded through ESSHI. Other state funding is through New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Community Access Inc., the project's developer, will provide on-site social services that will include individual counseling, self-help groups, structured group activities, harm-reduction services, linkages with community mental health and health care providers, medication management assistance, and employment referrals. Additional services focused on senior tenants will include individual support and linkages to services by a dedicated senior advocate, and on-site primary care services provided by a physician or nurse practitioner under contract to Community Access.

Residential amenities at Baez Place will include a community room with a commercial kitchen, computer room, laundry room, exercise room, and 24/7 front-desk security. Each apartment will be equipped with free broadband internet access. Residents will have the opportunity to participate in urban agriculture in the outdoor green space and in a greenhouse located on the top floor of the building. The neighborhood area in the immediate vicinity of the development offers a diverse mix of park and recreational spaces, places of worship, health care facilities, schools, and various eateries. The site is adjacent to Richman (Echo) Park to the north and near MTA bus stops, the subway stops for the B and D lines, and the Metro North Harlem line Tremont station.

Lincoln School Apartments, Ogdensburg

Funded through the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program, the Lincoln School Apartments in Ogdensburg converted a former elementary school into 20 units of permanent supportive housing for adults with mental illness who experienced homelessness. Opened in August, the \$5.2-million supportive housing project includes 18 studio apartments for single adults and two one-bedroom apartment for homeless couples.

The project involved adding an elevator and a new heating system. Support services to be provided include case management, self-help groups, health and wellness classes, independent living skills, home healthcare, and advisement on benefits.

The project was developed by S.T.E.P. By S.T.E.P. Inc., a local organization in St. Lawrence County, and received state funding from the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program, which is administered by OTDA and the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York's Affordable Home Program. OMH provided start-up funding and will fund the supportive services through ESSHI.

The Mieleles, Queens

OMH took part in the ribbon cutting for the opening of The Mieleles in Jamaica, the newest supportive housing project by Transitional Services for New York, Inc. The building will provide 42 homeless individuals coming from shelters with a home, as well as 27 seniors who need an affordable place to live.



Commissioner Sullivan speaking at the opening ceremony for The Mieleles in Queens.

Originally occupying the Monica House, the site of this groundbreaking supportive housing project was developed by Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens. It was one of the first projects funded by the New York/New York Agreement to house the homeless mentally ill. Additionally, the funding agreement was the first in the United States to bring together New York State and City agencies to test the concept that housing was an answer for homeless people with mental illnesses and an alternative to in-patient hospital facilities. Communities across the nation have since created supportive housing after the cost study of the New York agreements reflected its cost-effectiveness.



Groundbreaking for Harison Place.

Harison Place, Malone

Construction started this summer on Harison Place, a \$22-million mixed-use development with 40 affordable apartments and five commercial spaces in the Franklin County Village of Malone.

Harison Place will have on-site support services for 20 households experiencing homelessness. Its 19th century-style façade includes a flatiron shape made of engineered stone and brick with embellishments.

The building will include sandstone blocks salvaged during demolition of Malone's historic Paddock Building - also known as the Gorman Building - which was destroyed in a 2017 fire. The project developers are Citizen Advocates and 3d Development Group, LLC. State funding is being provided by OTDA, HCR, Empire State Development, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

Workforce:

Increasing recruitment, training, and diversity

In response to the need to strengthen the state's healthcare workforce, OMH is participating in programs to increase compensation, sharpen skills, and bring more diversity into the field.

Worker Bonus Program

The Health Care and Mental Hygiene Worker Bonus program will allocate \$1.3 billion for the payment of recruitment and retention bonuses to certain health care and mental hygiene workers, a key initiative in Governor Hochul's aim to increase the state's health care workforce by 20 percent over the next five years.

"Throughout the pandemic, including the early days when many were hunkered down at home, our health care workers and first responders have shown up day after day to keep New Yorkers healthy and save lives," said the Governor in announcing the program. "Our bonus program is about more than just thanks, this is an investment in health care and with it we will retain, rebuild, and grow our health care workforce and ensure we deliver the highest quality care for New Yorkers."

Employers eligible for program funding include providers participating in Medicaid with at least one employee, and other providers, facilities, pharmacies and school-based health centers licensed under the state Public Health Law, Mental Hygiene Law, and Education Law, as well as certain programs funded by the OMH, Office for the Aging, Office of Addiction Services and Supports, the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, and the Office of Children and Family Services.

Employees eligible for payments provide hands-on health care services and can include certain front-line health care and mental hygiene practitioners, technicians, assistants, support staff, and aides. They must be receiving an annualized base salary (excluding any bonuses or overtime pay) of \$125,000 or less, and can be full-time, part-time, or temporary. State employees who meet the eligibility requirements for the program will be eligible to receive the bonus payments, just as eligible employees who work outside of state government will be. Such employees will be paid through existing state payroll systems.

Bonuses for employees will be determined by specific "vesting periods," or hours worked during a consecutive six-month period between October 1, 2021, through March 31, 2024.

Qualified employees who work:

- At least 20 hours but no more than 30 hours per week are eligible for a bonus of \$500.
- At least 30 hours but no more than 35 hours per week are eligible for a bonus of \$1,000.
- At least 35 hours per week are eligible for a bonus of \$1,500.

A qualified employee can receive up to a maximum of \$3,000 in total bonus payments over two vesting periods. Employees may not receive bonuses if they have ever been suspended or excluded from the Medicaid program and must be enrolled in the program by their employer, who are mandated to award funds no later than 30 days after a worker's eligibility for a bonus has vested.

Eligible employers can submit employees who qualify for payments by creating an account on the online portal at www.nysworkerbonus.com.

Employers must be either currently enrolled and maintain an active MMIS ID with eMedNY or employers that do not have an MMIS ID, meaning they are not enrolled in the NYS Medicaid system, will need to verify that they have a Statewide Financial System (SFS) ID. Eligible employers without eMedNY can enroll at www.emedny.org.



Student diversity

OMH is partnering with the State and City universities of New York in a program to support underrepresented students entering or enrolled in mental health degree programs. The partnership will create incentives for minority and multilingual students enrolled to enter in or continue paths of study that will prepare them for the mental health field. This is the latest action New York State has taken to address a lack of diversity in the field, which in turn leads to disparities in the delivery of mental health care for marginalized populations.

Minority health care providers are more likely to meet the needs of underserved populations, with a diverse workforce resulting in greater patient and client satisfaction, engagement, and retention in care. The mental health workforce is experiencing a shortage of multilingual clinicians, further driving disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for individuals who have limited English proficiency.

Students eligible for this assistance are those who are multilingual; enrolled in a language-specific degree program; or are of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Latinx, Spanish origin, or are Native American, Alaska Native, Black, African American, Native Hawai'iian or other Pacific Islander. Eligible programs at CUNY include certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's and doctorate programs in social work and human services; psychology; psychiatric nursing; and grief counseling and mental health counseling. At SUNY community colleges, eligible programs include associate degree programs in liberal arts and sciences: humanities and social sciences with tracks or concentrations including mental health assistant, human services, sociology, and psychology. On four-year SUNY campuses, eligible degree programs include health and society; public health concentration; sociology and psychology.

Many of these four-year institutions also offer a Master of Science degree program in mental health counseling and a master's degree program in social work, as well as dual degree programs in mental health counseling or a master's degree in public health. Eligible studies at SUNY university centers include Bachelor of Science degrees in mental health counseling, human development; and doctorate degrees in sociology, psychology; and Doctor of Psychology degrees.

Governor Hochul is directing \$2 million to each university system to support tuition assistance, paid internships, and direct stipends for minority and multilingual students.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training academy

OMH is collaborating with the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS) to create a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training Academy to expand the pool of Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioners in the state.

Psychiatric rehabilitation helps adults living with major mental health conditions obtain the skills, supports and resources needed to successfully advance their health and recovery and to meet their essential personal social, employment, housing and related life goals.

OMH has awarded NYAPRS \$6.5 million over three years for the academy. NYAPRS will be partnering with Boston University and a number of other leading state advocacy and training organizations to develop and provide evidence-based psychiatric rehabilitation training for direct practitioners throughout the state. OMH is investing funds secured through the enhanced federal medical assistance program (eFMAP) funding made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Training will be targeted to community-based adult outpatient rehabilitation providers and will be delivered through a variety of in-person, virtual, and web-based sessions. Practitioners who complete the entire training series will be eligible to sit for the Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) exam. The funding includes scholarships for staff to cover the cost of test readiness and the exam.



For information on the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training Academy, visit: <https://psychrehabacademy.org/>