



# Kendrick Foundation Kicks Off THREE-YEAR MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE in Morgan County Schools

Awards over \$540,000 in Grants for School Year 2021-22

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Morgan County, IN— The Kendrick Foundation is proud to announce a three-year commitment to improving the mental health of Morgan County residents through a partnership with Adult & Child Health, Centerstone Indiana, and the county's four public school systems.

"We're thrilled to have the opportunity to work with these two health systems and our local schools to provide additional mental health services, supports, and resources for Morgan County," said Eric Wymer, M.D., Kendrick Foundation Board President. "Mental health has been a priority of our foundation and grantmaking for several years now, but qualitative and quantitative data indicate an even greater need with a global pandemic and other societal challenges."

According to the 2021 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Morgan County adults report on average 4.8 poor mental health days per month and 16% report frequent mental distress. Morgan County has higher rates of drug overdose deaths and suicide than the state. Many Morgan County residents also lack adequate access to mental health providers – as Morgan County is designated by the Health Resources & Services Administration as a health professional shortage area for mental health.

Additionally, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, many mental health conditions first appear in youth and young adults, with 50% of all conditions beginning by age 14 and 75% by age 24. One in six youth have a mental health condition, like anxiety or depression, but only half receive any mental health services.

Early treatment is effective and can help young people stay in school and on track to achieving their life goals. In fact, the earlier the treatment, the better the outcomes and lower the costs. Untreated or inadequately treated mental illness can lead to high rates of school dropout, unemployment, substance use, arrest, incarceration, and early death.

Schools can play an important role in helping children and youth get help early. Schools also play a vital role in providing or connecting children, youth, and families to services. School-based mental health services bring trained mental health professionals into schools and school-linked mental health services connect youth and families to more intensive resources in the community.

"When we invest in children's mental health to make sure they can get the right care at the right time, we improve the lives of children, youth, and families — and our communities," said Keylee Wright, M.A., Kendrick Foundation Executive Director. "As a result of this initiative, Morgan County residents will have greater access to mental health practitioners and services regardless of their ability to pay."



## THREE-YEAR MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Adult & Child Health is a community mental health center and provides behavioral health support in over 130 schools in central Indiana. This unique access creates an ideal setting for reducing at-risk behaviors through prevention and intervention programs. Adult & Child Health will be providing additional mental health services at Mooresville Consolidated School Corporation, MSD of Martinsville, and Monroe-Gregg School District. Students across each district will have the opportunity to participate in voluntary supportive services consisting of individual, family, group, and case management.

Centerstone is a not-for-profit health system providing mental health and substance use disorder treatments. With the help of the Kendrick Foundation, Centerstone Indiana embedded behavioral health professionals within Eminence Community Schools, removing barriers to prevention and treatment programs, and will continue these efforts through this grant initiative.

School-based and school-linked mental health services reduce barriers to youth and families getting needed treatment and supports, especially for underserved communities. School-based mental health programs are a voluntary service approved through caregiver consent and delivered by trained mental health professionals, such as psychologists, counselors, and social workers.

The total cost of this initiative for the first year is over \$1.2 million. The Kendrick Foundation's financial investment is \$540,385. The grantees and schools invested the remaining amount.

Formed from the proceeds of the sale of the Kendrick Memorial Hospital in 2001, the mission of the Kendrick Foundation is to financially support education and initiatives that improve the physical and mental health of Morgan County residents. To learn more about how the Kendrick Foundation is leading health initiatives for Morgan County, please visit [kendrickfoundation.org](http://kendrickfoundation.org).

