



HEALTHY MINDS
STRONG COMMUNITIES

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A Bipartisan Informational Briefing Hosted by the Cities Thrive Coalition in Conjunction with the Congressional Mental Health Caucus Addressing "Building Mental Health Equity in the Wake of COVID-19"

Over the past year, in California and across the nation, we have grappled with the individual and collective traumas of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, for many, another pandemic has plagued communities for much longer—a racial reckoning that challenges us to stand up against the systematic and structural racism that has resulted in inequities for BIPOC communities in all aspects of American Life. COVID-19 presented another contributor of chronic toxic stress, revealing the scope and magnitude of generational inequities for BIPOC communities, particularly in health care.

To date, more than 608,528 Americans have died of COVID-19. BIPOC individuals and families have suffered disproportionately due to the double pandemic we face. Numbers don't lie, as Black Americans are dying from COVID-19 at nearly 2.5 times the rate of their white counterparts (61.6 deaths compared to 26.2 deaths per 100,000 people) [ii](#). Still, we have not seen or experienced the full impact of these pandemics.

America has woken up to the fact we are on the verge of a mental health crisis like we have never seen before, and once again, due to inequities in our systems of care, BIPOC communities are set to bear the disproportional impact of the crisis. According to a study done by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, nearly half of all Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American individuals say they have personally experienced increased mental health challenges over the past 12 months, but few received treatment [iii](#). For example, 46% of Black adults say they are experiencing more stress and mental health challenges, but just 21% say they have received treatment or care of any kind for their mental health. With respect to substance use, 13% of adults surveyed say they are more aware of their substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet just 3% of the 10% of Native American adults surveyed received treatment for substance use.

As we determine a national strategy to combat the growing mental health and substance use crisis, the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA) is honored to be invited by the National Council of Mental Wellbeing to present at the bipartisan informational briefing today, July 27th, 2021, hosted by the Cities Thrive Coalition in conjunction with the Congressional Mental Health Caucus on "Building Mental Health Equity in the Wake of COVID-19" from 2:00-3:00 pm EST.

"CBHA is proud to be a part of the behavioral health community and work with our partners to advance the mission of strengthening care for all. To do so, we must continue to engage in dialogue with policymakers, community leaders, medical professionals, and the public about keeping our communities safe," said Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of CBHA. "CBHA would like to thank the National Council for Mental Wellbeing for the invitation, and our hosts, New York City's First Lady, Chirlane McCray, and the Cities Thrive Coalition, as well as the Congressional Mental Health Caucus & Co-Chair Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (CA-32) for holding this essential briefing."



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If you wish to watch the briefing, please [click here to register](#).

California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA) is a statewide association of nonprofit community-based organizations who provide mental health, substance use, housing, education, and vocational rehabilitation services to over 750,000 children, youth, adults, and older adults in California.

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing is a membership organization that drives policy and social change on behalf of nearly 3,500 mental health and substance use treatment organizations and the more than 10 million children, adults and families they serve. We advocate for policies to ensure equitable access to high-quality services. We build the capacity of mental health and substance use treatment organizations.