Welcome to the Congressional Briefing on the Landmark Bi-Partisan “Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act”

Co-Sponsored By:
the Congressional Social Work Caucus

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Facilitated by Bob Doppelt
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Website: http://itrcoalition.org
No other health issue comes close to creating the wide range of individual, family, community, and societal troubles as pervasive mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial struggles!
“Community is Medicine!”
Introducing Congressman Paul Tonko (D-NY)

Introducing Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE)

Introducing Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA)

Introducing Senator Ed Markey (D-MA)
US is experiencing an epidemic of mental health & psychosocial conditions.

**The Noted Pioneer Clinical Psychologist Dr. George Albee Once Said:**

“No epidemic has ever been resolved by paying attention to the treatment of the affected individual."

To address today’s mental health epidemic—and prevent future ones—we must expand our nation’s approach to mental health by embracing a

**Public Health Approach**

to

**Mental Wellness and Resilience**
A Public Health Approach to Mental Wellness & Resilience

• Focuses on the **Entire Population**--- not merely on individuals with symptoms of pathology or high-risk groups—though they **must** be included by using “proportionate universalism” and “life-course” approaches:

  Our approach must **“Leave No One Behind.”**

• Prioritizes **Preventing Mental Health Problems Before They Occur** --- not merely reacting to or treating them after they emerge—and integrates group and community-minded Healing methods into the prevention strategies:

  We must always remember that **“Prevention is the Cure!”**

• Does so by strengthening **“Protective Factors”** —social supports, resilience skills, habits, resources etc. that build and sustain healthy thinking, behaviors and responses -- not just fixing deficits or treating symptoms of pathology:

  We must emphasis **“Building Skills, Strengths, and Resources”**
Research and ample experience shows that mental wellness and resilience can be enhanced and mental health problems can be prevented & healed.

And that the Most Effective Way to do so is to:

- establish the “Social Infrastructure” in communities—that can be called Resilience Coordinating Networks (RCNs)...
- that engages a broad and diverse array of local residents, civic groups, non-profit, private, and public organizations...
- in planning and implementing locally chosen & tailored strategies that strengthen the capacity of residents for mental wellness and resilience.
The Social Infrastructure Needed: A “Sample” Resilience Coordinating Network (RCN)

“Well-Coordinated Decentralization” using a “Ring Team” or “Hub and Spoke” Approach

Gets Us Out of Our Silos to Plan and Work Together for the Common Good

Steering Committee/Board of Directors With Co-Chairs

- Community Leader Innovation Teams
- Neighborhood Innovation Teams
- Neighborhood Leaders
- Private Sector Leaders
- Private Sector Innovation Teams
- Civic Leaders
- Youth Leaders
- Child & Youth Innovation Teams
- Healthcare Teams
- Mental Health & Human Services Leaders
- Public Sector Leaders
- Education Innovation Teams
- Public Sector Innovation Teams
- Non-profit Leaders
- Faith Leaders
- Emergency Mgt., Public Safety Teams

With Co-Chairs

Steering Committee/Board of Directors

With Co-Chairs
Our Research Identified Five Foundational Content Areas Required to Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience

By Far the Most Important:
Build “Strong” and “Weak” Social Connections and Supports Across Cultural, Economic, and Geographic Boundaries in the Community
The Five Foundational Content Areas Required to Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience

Ensure a “Just Transition” by Engaging Residents in Creating Low-Emissions Climate-Resilient Physical/Built, Economic, and Ecological Conditions

- Living-Wage Jobs and Income
- Locally Owned and Operated Businesses
- Ample and Safe Housing
- Healthy and Safe Public Spaces
- Healthy Forests and Ecological Systems
- Equitable Transport Infrastructure
Foster Universal “Literacy” About Mental Wellness and Resilience: Help Everyone Become “Trauma and Resilience-Informed”
Help Residents Regularly Engage in Specific Practices that Enhance Mental Wellness and Resilience
Establish Ongoing Age and Culturally-Appropriate Mostly Peer-Led Group and Community-Minded Programs to Heal Trauma
These Interventions Move Us Beyond Merely Treating Mental Health Symptoms After They Appear and Reacting to the Next Disaster to Show How "Community is Medicine!"
Government Has a *Very Important* Role to Play

• Most important is to **help establish the conditions** for local Resilience Coordinating Networks **to be successful**.

• One key way to do this is to **provide start-up funds**, as well as **long-term funding** if Resilience Coordinating Networks **attain their objectives**.

• Government can also **enhance the credibility** of Resilience Coordinating Networks by **publicly acknowledging them**, which will increase their ability to engage more people and raise other funds.

• They can also direct **public agencies** to **participate in** and **coordinate** their work with local Resilience Coordinating Networks.
“The Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act” will authorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to:

- Establish a **Planning Grant** of up to $250,000 for one year to help communities organize Resilience Coordinating Networks.

- Establish an **Program Grant** of up to $500,000 for up to 4 years to help support the implementation and continual improvement Resilience Coordinating Networks.

- Establish 20% **Funding Set-Asides** for Rural communities.

- Establish a **CDC Technical Assistance Program** to help community groups develop grant proposals and help funded participants learn from each other.

- Appropriates **$36 million** for the program.
Mebane Boyd, Resilient Communities Officer
North Carolina Partnership for Children, Healthy and Resilient Communities Program

North Carolina Resilience Coalitions

Smart Start
J’vanete Skiba, Director
New Hanover County Resiliency Task Force
Becky Turner, Director of Community Engagement
Community Resilience Initiative, Walla Walla WA.
Charlotte Eure, Coordinator
Virginia's Trauma-Informed Community Networks
Robin Saenger, Founding Director
Peace4Tarpon, Tarpon Springs, FL.
• Only a few of the initiatives frame their work as a public health approach—and none address all of the 5 foundational areas our research identified.

• Each is unique because they are organized to address the issues, needs, and demographics of their community: there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

But if these existing initiatives are strengthened, and thousands of new community initiatives are launched nationwide

We CAN Reduce Todays Mental Health Epidemic and Prevent Future Ones!
Comments by Leaders of National Organizations

Dr. David Shern, Senior Public Health Advisor, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

Sarah Butts, Director of Public Policy, National Association of Social Workers

Katherine Catalano, Deputy Director, Center for Climate and Health Equity American Public Health Association

Ruben Cantu, Director, Safety and Wellbeing Team, Prevention Institute

Dr. Joshua Wortzel, Chair, Committee on Climate Change and Mental Health, American Psychiatric Association
SUMMARY

We are in a new era of relentless accelerating cascading toxic stresses, emergencies, and extreme weather disasters.

The “Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act” is Landmark

- It will expand the US approach to mental health to address the new era of persistent pervasive traumatic stressors...

- By actively engaging communities in forming Resilience Coordinating Networks that use a public health approach...

- To strengthen resident’s capacity for mental wellness and resilience to prevent and heal distresses and traumas as they also engage in solutions to their challenges.

Resilience Coordinating Networks are needed in every neighborhood and community nationwide to address the accelerating traumatic stressors!
The Benefits Will Be Far-Reaching

- **Prevent** and **heal** distresses and traumas generated by all types of adversities
- Protect the **health**, **safety**, and **wellbeing** of individuals, families, communities
- Reduce **demands** on mental and physical healthcare systems
- Strengthen the **wellness** and **resilience** of mental health, social work, human services, physical health, and community safety providers
- Enhance **employability** and safeguard local **businesses** and the **economy**
- Build the **social efficacy** and **common purpose** needed to address today’s problems
If Your Organization Supports The
“Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act”

• Please **contact** your **House** and **Senate Members** to state your support and urge them to co-sponsor and swiftly enact the legislation.

• Please tell your **members** and **partners** about the legislation and encourage them to contact their House and Senate members to urge enactment.

• **Add your organization** to the **over 150** national, state, and local organizations that have already endorsed the CMWRA.

**Next Week**

**you will receive information from us on how to accomplish these tasks**
Thank You for Attending Today’s Congressional Briefing!

For more information contact the International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC)

Email: tr@trig-cli.org

Website: http://itrcoalition.org