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State agencies collaborate on mental health initiative
Campaign urges self-care for all New Mexicans amid health crisis

SANTA FE -- At the urging of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, New Mexico state agencies have launched a collaborative, multi-faceted campaign to remind New Mexicans that mental health care is just health care, and it's just a click, call or text away.

The “Path to Wellness” campaign is designed to reach teens and adults with a message of help for those needing it now and hope for a brighter future for all.

The campaign will include social media, push notices, website banners, a media guide, higher education testimonials, a first-person video series, television public service announcements and a suicide prevention billboard.

“The global health pandemic has heaped additional stress and anxiety on all of us, and the need for self care and compassionate outreach has never been greater,” Gov. Lujan Grisham said. “There must be a conversation throughout New Mexico about the toll this is taking on all of us because to beat it, we first must address it. Needing help is not a sign of weakness. We can get through this together, and we will get through this.”

Much of the campaign’s messaging will point New Mexicans to state resources including the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line (1-855-NMCRISIS), which provides 24-hour support from clinically trained experts and resources; the Peer to Peer Warmline (1-855-4NM-7100) to

connect with a peer; and NM Connect, a free phone app to call, text and connect with mental health resources. Media outlets are encouraged to highlight these resources in their coverage for the benefit of viewers and readers.

“The truth is, we will get through this together. New Mexicans helping each other – that’s what communities and tribes have done all over the state since the pandemic began,” said Bryce Pittenger, head of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative, a cabinet-level group representing 15 state agencies and the Governor’s Office. “All of us from time to time are feeling the impact of pandemic. Sometimes it’s enough to know that we are not alone; sometimes we need more. The campaign aims to give hope, information and resources so people can choose what they need,” she said.

A recent study by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 40 percent of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or drug use in late June.

“Losing your job is stressful. Schools closing, that’s stressful. Being separated from loved ones and familiar routines -- all stressful,” said Victoria Waugh-Reed, youth suicide prevention coordinator at the state Department of Health. “That’s why we’ve launched this campaign to remind folks to reach out to one another. These are tough times for everyone and while one person does not have the power to end the pandemic, I know that each individual person does have the power to look out for and check on others. We can take care of each other. We can do that.”

The campaign includes the Children, Youth & Families Department, Early Childhood Education & Care Department, the Department of Health’s Office of School and Adolescent Health, Higher Education Department, Human Services Department, Indian Affairs Department, Public Education Department and Department of Transportation.

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