



# 2020 Virtual Hill Day Kickoff

#MHAhillday2020

**MHIA**  
Mental Health America  
**B4Stage4**



# Welcome



**Debbie Plotnick**  
**Mental Health America**

# Housekeeping #MHAhillday2020

Participants will be in listen only mode.

This webinar is being recorded so you can listen later, and participants will receive an email when the recording is posted online.

Please type questions into the chat box during the presentation as there will be question and answer session before the webinar concludes.

# MHA's Mission

Mental Health America (MHA) - founded in 1909 - is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans.

Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all; early identification and intervention for those at risk; integrated care, services, and supports for those who need them; with recovery as the goal.



# Trends in Screenings



**Paul Gionfriddo**  
**Mental Health America**



# MHA Screening

- Began in April 2014.
- Access to screening tools is free and anonymous at [www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org).
- Most screeners voluntarily give de-identified demographic data.
- Screeners are young, (63% < 25 years), female (72%).
- Help-seeking population (74% positive).
- Otherwise representative of the population.

# Mental Health and COVID-19: Thousands Impacted by Anxiety and Depression

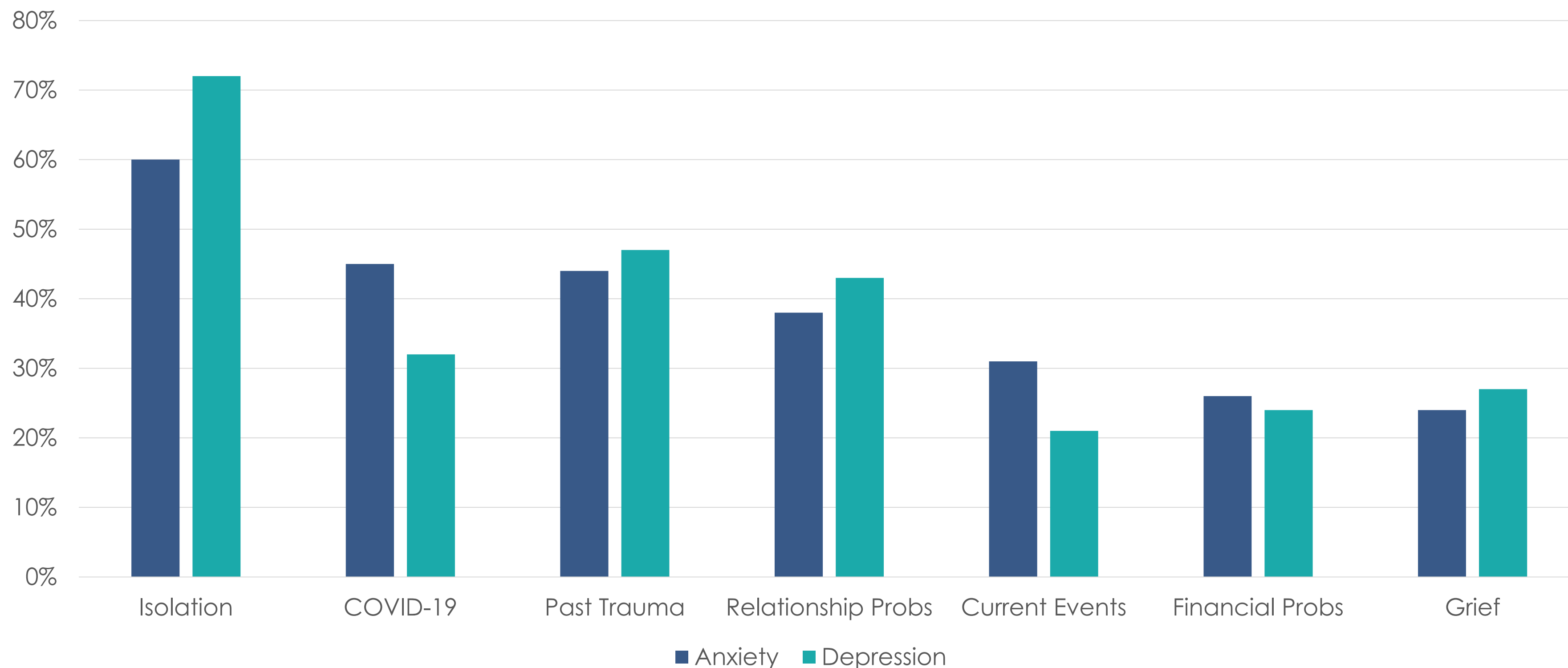
- Since the beginning of the worry about COVID-19 in mid-to-late February, there have been at least **17,822 additional positive depression and anxiety screening results** over what had been expected (using November 2019-January 2020 average as a baseline).
- There have been **10,193 additional moderate to severe depression** and more than **7,629 additional moderate to severe anxiety screening results from late February through the end of April.**
- The per day number of anxiety screenings completed in April was **70% higher** than in January, before coronavirus stress began. The per day number of depression screens was **64% higher** in April than in January.
- These impacts on mental health are **more pronounced in young people (<25):** roughly 9 in 10 are screening with moderate-to-severe depression, **and** 8 in 10 are screening with moderate-to-severe anxiety.

# Mental Health and COVID-19: Isolation, Thoughts of Suicide & Self-Harm Increasing

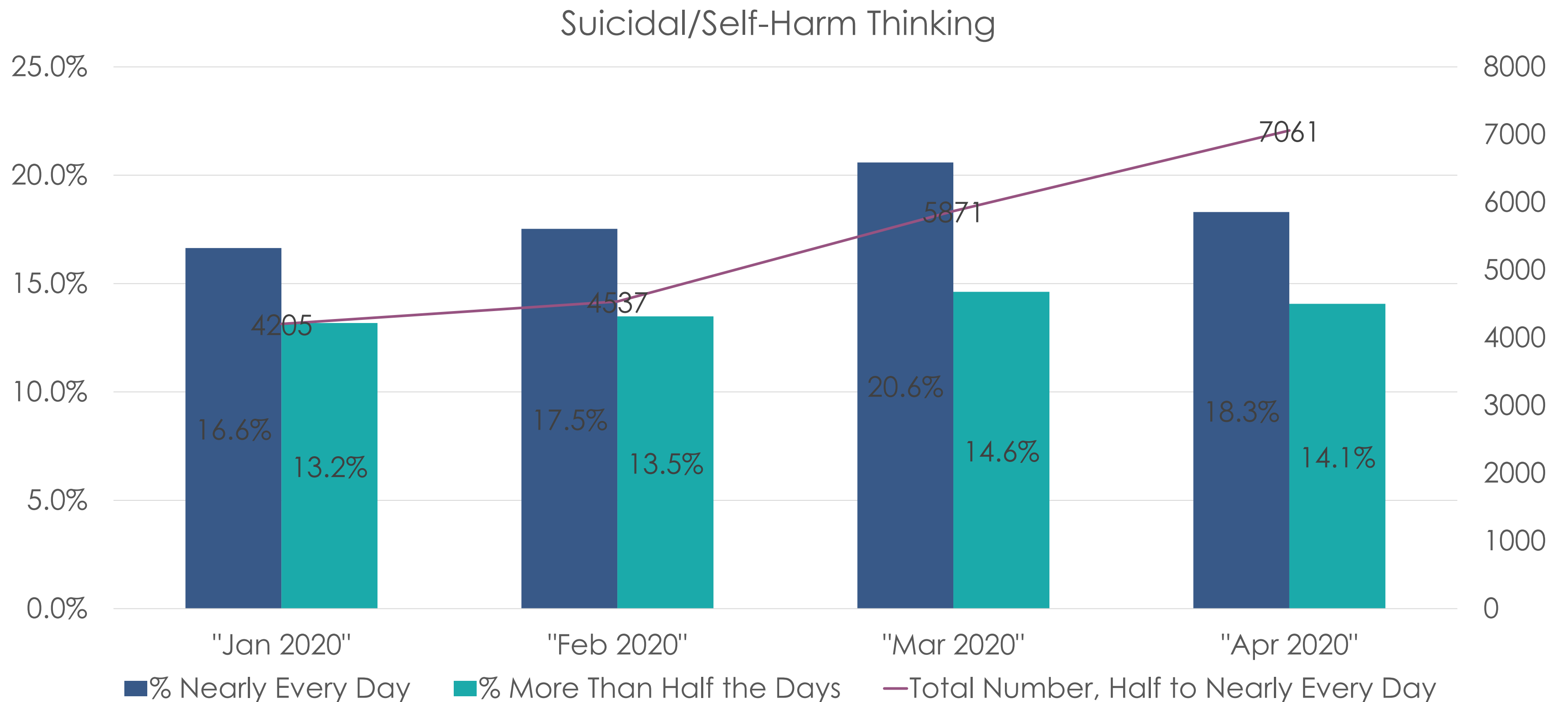
- **“Loneliness and isolation”** is cited by the greatest percent of moderate to severe depression (72%) and anxiety (60%) screeners as contributing to mental health problems “right now.”
- COVID-19 and current events are cited more frequently by screeners as contributing to anxiety than they are to depression, and grief is cited more frequently as contributing to depression.
- During March and April, we have seen increases in **both the percentage and numbers of depression screeners who report thinking of suicide or self-harm** on more than half of days to nearly every day.
- This isn't just affecting people with anxiety and depression. Among psychosis screeners in March, the number at risk did not increase, but the severity of their results did. In April, severity was not as high as March, but still higher than previous months – and the number at risk increased considerably.



# Isolation/Loneliness Tougher for People w Depression; COVID-19 & Current Events Greater Concerns for Those w Anxiety



# In % of Screeners & Total Number, Suicidal/Self-Harm Thinking Was Up in Mar/Apr v. Jan/Feb





# For More Resources

- For MHA COVID-19 resources:  
<https://www.mhanational.org/covid19>
- For other mental health COVID-19 resources:  
<https://psychhub.com/covid-19/>
- To take a free mental health screen:  
<https://screening.mhanational.org>

# A message from Special Guest Chris Wood







# Congressman Chris Stewart (UT-02)





# Federal Update



**Mary Giliberti**  
**Mental Health America**

# COVID-19 Congressional Response

Coronavirus Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act – specific to MH and SUD:

- \$425M to SAMHSA
- Expanded CCBHCs to 2 more states
- Aligned rules around sharing SUD information (42 CFR Part II) to HIPAA



# COVID-19 Congressional Response

General provisions with impact on MH and SUD:

- \$349B to SBA for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and \$10B for Economic Injury Disaster loans (EIDL)
- \$100B to HHS for health organizations
- \$200M to FCC for telehealth, CMHCs eligible
- Flexibility to HHS to waive rules

Congress later added to PPP, EIDL and HHS provider fund

# COVID-19 Administration's Response

- HHS has allocated \$70B of the first \$175B; has not addressed providers who receive Medicaid, not Medicare (many behavioral health organizations); allocated SAMHSA funds
- HHS has approved Medicaid waivers to allow telehealth flexibility
- HHS has waived Medicare restrictions on telehealth, most recently allowing reimbursement for audio-only therapy and other BH services
- Advocacy has made a difference!

# Next Steps in Legislative Process





# Congressman Tim Burchett (TN-02)









# Asks and Actions



# Underfunded Mental Health System





# What's Happening in the Field?

- Increased need
- Staffing changes - teleworking, downsizing
- Peers/staff report increased feelings of loneliness, isolation
- Warm lines/emotional support lines report higher call demand
- Virtual peer support growing
- PPE shortages

# Funding

Ask your legislators to support:

- \$10B to states to meet critical mental health & addiction needs in local communities
- \$38.5B to mental health & addiction providers
- Increased resources to address workforce shortages
- Grow research about the mental health effects of COVID-19



# Suicide Prevention

Ask your legislators to support:

- \$80m total funding for the Lifeline
- Designating 9-8-8 as new Lifeline
- School-based mental health services

# Telehealth Services

Ask your legislators to ensure:

- All health plans are covering telehealth services fully now and beyond the emergency
- House bill requiring employer-sponsored plans to reimburse for telehealth services at parity

# Grassroots Advocacy



**Caren Howard**  
**Mental Health America**



## Virtual Hill Day Actions

- Sign up for MHA's Advocacy Network for email & alerts
- Find your U.S. Senators and Representative
- Request a virtual meeting with U.S. Senators & Representative
- Call & leave a message with your legislators' staff to share your story
- Take MHA's Hill Day/COVID-19 action alert and remember to personalize your email with your story
- Send a message or post to your legislator on Twitter and Facebook using hashtag #MHAhillday2020

# Storytelling

- Take time to think about you or a loved one's lived experience with a mental health condition before or during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Craft a brief story about the experience, clearly stating the unmet need: (up to 1-minute speaking or 2 paragraphs in writing).
- Make an "ask" at the end of the story.



# Senator Tina Smith (MN)







# Naomi Plasky

## Rep. Joe Kennedy (MA-04)





# Question & Answer

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# Closing Charge:

**3 Priorities – Funding, Youth & Adult  
Suicide Prevention, and Telehealth**

**Actions – Tweet, Post, Call, Virtual  
Meet, Email alert, Invite a friend**

# Contact Us



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# More Action

Go on record to educate state & local officials through calls/emails/posts about the dangers of CUTTING funding from mental health as budget shortfalls grow during COVID-19.

- Health commissioner, Governor, MH and SUD Departments
- Legislative Budget Committee Chairs and Appropriations Committee Chairs