



Promote Medical Mental Health Care to Solve our Nation's Pediatric Mental Health Crisis

Issue

The reorganization of federal health services and attacks on the role of medicine in mental health care threaten to undo decades of progress for youth mental health.

Background

- The reorganization, and subsequent downsizing, of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) jeopardizes the ability to treat substance use disorder, prevent suicide, and identify shortages in healthcare professionals at a time when the mental health of our nation's youth continues to worsen.
- 10% reduction of the 988 Lifeline workforce will diminish the ability of 988 to adequately field the hundreds of thousands of monthly calls the service receives.
- Millions of dollars in substance use and mental health block grants have been cancelled or rescinded. This both puts state budgets in an unstable position and cuts off access to critical behavioral health services for children.
- The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) FY26 budget proposal plans to eliminate several federal health programs of vital importance to youth mental health, such as Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers and Mental and Behavioral Health Education and Training, and reduce funding for retained programs.
- HHS leadership's approach to the prescription of psychotropic medication threatens access for millions of children who need these treatments. Psychotropic medication has proven safe, effective, and lifesaving when prescribed for youth populations and used as directed by trained physicians.
- Untreated mental health conditions contribute directly to exacerbated mental health issues, declining physical health, and worse.

Requests

- Continue to fund federal mental health programs at adequate levels to best meet the needs of our child and adolescent populations.
- Utilize available input from medical professional societies to ensure any structural changes to federal health programs prioritize developmentally informed, family-centered, and evidence-based approaches.