



Contact: David Heayn-Menendez, Mental Health
Campaign Senior Advisor for Communications
davidhm@childrenfirstpa.org, 267-361-7945

Urgent Youth Mental Health Crisis: Over 1 Million Pennsylvania Children Denied Critical Care – Expert Panel to Discuss Solutions

Pennsylvania - October 25, 2024, at 12 PM - Children First will convene a webinar, bringing together leading health experts to address Pennsylvania's escalating youth mental health crisis. With half of Pennsylvania's children who need mental health supports not able to access life changing care – particularly the 1.2 million low-income children on Medicaid – the state is facing an urgent and worsening crisis that will impact the future of our children and cost more for the healthcare system and taxpayers.

The latest PA Youth Survey reveals an alarming and worsening trend: **50% of children who died by suicide had no prior mental health diagnosis**, and **41% of students feel persistently sad or depressed**. These stark numbers signal a system failing to intervene early enough. While 38 states are moving forward with effective, preventative care models, Pennsylvania lags behind. The webinar will focus on **dyadic care**, an innovative approach proven to address the needs of both children and their caregivers simultaneously - offering support before mental health issues escalate into more harmful and costly crises. Dyadic care models as a critical solution and it is crucial to advance proven preventative models that effectively treat children.

WHAT: An expert panel webinar focused on the need for dyadic care models to address youth mental health issues in Pennsylvania. Speakers will discuss how dyadic care can prevent crises by supporting both children and their caregivers early in the treatment process.

WHO:

- Sally Kozak, Deputy Secretary, PA Office of Medical Assistance Programs (Opening Remarks)
- Alex Briscoe, California Children's Trust
- Dr. Natalie Minto, CHOP Primary Care at Cobbs Creek
- Dr. Abby Schlesinger, UPMC Children's Hospital

WHEN: Friday, October 25, 2024, at 12:00 PM EST

WHERE: Online Webinar (<https://tinyurl.com/32m5e878>)

WHY: Pennsylvania lags behind other states in offering access to dyadic care, which has been proven to reduce mental health crises and improve outcomes for children. With one in five U.S. children experiencing a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder, early

preventative care and caregiver-inclusive care models like dyadic care are essential to addressing mental health challenges and preventing crises.

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Children First is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that improves the lives of children in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties by developing initiatives and advocating for quality health care, childcare, public education, and family stability. Learn more at www.childrenfirstpa.org, and on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube at @childrenfirstpa.

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For more information or to schedule interviews, contact David Heayn-Menendez at 215-562-5848 x 232 or davidhm@childrenfirstpa.org

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