

U.S. Rep. Steil: Hosts Children's Mental Health Forum, introduces the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support During COVID-19 Act

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ANESVILLE, WISCONSIN—Bryan Steil listened and spoke with parents, doctors, and experts today during the virtual Children's Mental Health Forum. Panelists from a variety of local, state, and federal organizations provided insight on mental health challenges facing our children and best practices, especially during the coronavirus crisis.

"The health and safety of our children is a top priority for me. Now more than ever, kids need our support. Today's panelists provided useful information on how to address mental health challenges, end the stigma, and ensure our children have access to resources. I know these times are hard for many parents and students. I will continue working to support families and healthy lives," **said Steil.**

Additionally, Bryan Steil announced the introduction of his bill, **H.R. 7893, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support During COVID-19 Act.** Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) is the co-lead on the bill. Steil's bill establishes a new grant program within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Grants would be awarded to states to provide additional mental health and substance abuse resources.

"Coronavirus has put many strains on families, workers, and children across the nation. Workers lost their jobs for no fault of their own. Health care professionals are working long hours, extra shifts, and spend days and weeks away from their families. Family members have made the difficult decision to not see loved ones to

protect their health. Ensuring people have access to mental health resources and helping states provide this assistance is critical. I am proud to introduce the **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support During COVID-19 Act** to increase lifesaving care and assistance for folks in this time of need. Thanks to all of the state, federal, and local officials, as well as health care providers, for partnering with me in this effort," **said Congressman Steil.**

"The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the limits of families across New Mexico with job losses, illness, and a lack of certainty becoming the norm. These sudden shifts have left many children and adults in need of additional support to manage these stressful situations. I'm proud to partner with Representative Steil to provide additional resources to providers on-the-ground in some of our highest need areas and deliver the care New Mexican needs in these uncertain times," **said Congresswoman Torres Small.**

If you are interested in a video of today's Children's Mental Health Forum, please contact Sally Fox.

During today's forum, Dr. Everett of SAMHSA highlighted importance resources from CDC on how to talk with children about coronavirus. [Please click here to learn more.](#)

Below is a list of panelists from today's event:

Amy Herbst: Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Vice President of Mental Health

Kevin Baldwin: concerned parent from Pleasant Prairie

Greg Winkler: Rock County Human Services Department, Deputy Director

Kelli Thompson: Wisconsin State Public Defender

Sonja Robinson: School District of Janesville, Student Services Coordinator

Dr. Anita Everett: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA), Director of the Center for Mental Health Services

Dr. Michelle Rose-Barajas: Mercyhealth, Licensed Psychologist

Dr. Dan Beardmore: SSM Health Dean Medical Group, Pediatrician

On Background:

H.R. 7893 establishes a \$1 billion “COVID-19 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Response Grant Program” within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration within the U.S. Health and Human Services Department. This program awards grants to states, on the basis of population, to help them address the rise in mental health and substance abuse public expenditures coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic.

States can use this grant money in a variety of ways including: 24/7 crisis call centers; support programs for frontline coronavirus health care workers; mental health and substance abuse training for relevant health care workforce and community members; and partnership programs with police departments, community organizations, and schools to coordinate and expand resources available to at-risk individuals and their families.