

Wisconsin Psychiatric Association: Statement on Gov. Evers' mental health initiatives and declaring 2023 the year of mental health

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Last night in his State of the State Address, Governor Tony Evers declared 2023 the Year of Mental Health. The Governor outlined numerous initiatives that the Wisconsin Psychiatric Association (WPA) deems critical to the well-being of residents across the state.

Funding and initiatives related to crisis stabilization and urgent care, peer-run respite services, and suicide and crisis services – including expansion of the “988” Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – are desperately needed. WPA also strongly appreciates the Governor’s emphasis and recognition of youth mental health challenges and his proposals to improve their mental health and safety.

Very importantly, the Governor also proposed \$7 million to establish a new Medical College of Wisconsin Psychiatry Residency and \$1.26 million for the Graduate Medical Education program to increase residency programs in rural Wisconsin hospitals. It is well known that the lack of psychiatrists across the state, particularly in rural Wisconsin, is at a crisis level. Increased access to training and ultimately the retention of psychiatrists would be an enormous step in the right direction.

The WPA applauds Governor Evers’ proposals and looks forward to working with the Legislature and the Administration within the biennial budget process and beyond for improved access to mental health care for all Wisconsinites.