



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2021

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH WITH A HEALING-CENTERED APPROACH

Initiatives will work to expand and strengthen access to mental health services, clinics, crisis prevention and resources, focusing on neighborhoods in the greatest need

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and City Leaders announced 'Un[]spoken,' a citywide campaign to combat the negative stigma surrounding mental health and increase awareness of the publicly funded resources that have significantly expanded under Mayor Lightfoot's leadership and through her Framework for Mental Health Equity.

Currently, 40 percent of Chicago residents feel that the subject of mental health is one of the greatest challenges facing the city today, and this mirrors national data showing the increased need for mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of her commitment to investing in Chicago's neighborhoods, Mayor Lightfoot has tripled the City's mental health budget since taking office, from \$12 million in 2019 to \$36 million in 2021. Through this new citywide campaign, the City of Chicago will encourage residents to speak out and help break down the stigma surrounding mental health and connect them to the mental health services available in their community.

"Increasing our residents' access to high-quality, affordable and conveniently-located mental healthcare resources is crucial to our ability to ensure their success and protect their wellbeing," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Fulfilling this goal has been especially pertinent during the pandemic, which has exacerbated many of the socioeconomic stressors that drive mental illness. Thanks to this incredible campaign, we will be able to not only raise more awareness about and connect residents to the wealth of mental healthcare resources our city has to offer but further root the recovery of our communities at the heart of our COVID-19 response."

In 2019, the City's mental health budget funded services for approximately 5,000 residents per year, whereas just six months into 2021, the City's mental health budget funded services for approximately 16,000 residents. This significant service



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



expansion of the City’s mental health safety net system has been fueled by an \$8 million annual investment, awarded in October 2020 to 32 trauma-informed centers of care in communities of highest need. These centers provide care to all persons, regardless of their ability to pay, lack of health insurance, or immigration status. The City also invested over \$3 million annually in team-based care to provide mental health services outside brick-and-mortar settings for hundreds of Chicagoans with complex needs.

“In the field of mental health treatment and crisis intervention, reaching people before they get to a point of crisis is critical,” said Diana Castañeda, Director of Youth and Crisis Services at Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4). “Since Mayor Lightfoot took office, the investments coming from the City have allowed organizations like C4 to broaden our scope and reach individuals struggling with their mental health, and get them proper treatment well before their situation escalates to the point of crisis.”

With the support of Edelman, the City of Chicago’s Un[]spoken mental health campaign will launch on August 30th. The campaign's website will include a resource finder, promotion strategies, and testimonials of Chicagoans telling their stories of mental health struggles and recovery.

Under the Mayor’s Framework for Mental Health Equity, the City is also strengthening the crisis prevention and response infrastructure. On August 30th, for the first time in City history, a new mental health program will launch that integrates mental health professionals into the City’s 9-1-1 response system. The Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) Program will ensure that individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis are met, with a team of professionals who can help resolve immediate crises and connect individuals to the appropriate community-based resources and supports.

###