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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT DOUBLES CITY INVESTMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH TO EXPAND EQUITY AND ACCESS TO CARE ACROSS CHICAGO'S COMMUNITIES

New mental health framework includes \$9.3 million investment in 2020 supports new citywide network of care to expand services for communities most in need

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) today released a comprehensive framework to transform mental healthcare in Chicago through investments in a coordinated citywide network of care that will increase access to care for the communities most in need. The Framework for Mental Health Equity includes \$9.3 million in new funding, which doubles CDPH's mental health budget, with investments that expand mental health services at 20 centers of care, including CDPH's five mental health clinics.

By doubling its annual investment in mental health, the City will build capacity to make services more accessible, ensure victims of violence receive mental healthcare in the neighborhoods hardest-hit by trauma, strengthen crisis prevention and response for people who need care outside of clinics and ensure every resident who needs help is linked to care.

"The City understands that access to high-quality mental healthcare is absolutely vital, and we're committed to building a system where everyone can get care when and where they need it," said Mayor Lightfoot. "We also know that, historically, access has been lacking in too many communities, particularly those on our south and west sides. That's why this framework prioritizes communities that have suffered from disinvestment."

Under the new Framework, the City will provide additional support for publicly-funded clinics, while solidifying support of five City-run mental health clinics, where investment and improvements are already underway. By directing new investments into an additional 15 publicly-funded clinics, the City will leverage existing community assets, partnering with them to expand staffing, scale services, and connect more people to care.

Additionally, this new Framework will extend beyond clinic walls to provide on-the-ground care to serve those who may have difficulty accessing services. The result of



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these combined investments will increase capacity in clinics and the overall system of care will help tens of thousands of more patients receiving the right services for their needs.

“An effective mental health system is critical to ensuring well being in every community. But the system in Chicago has significant gaps, keeping many of us from finding or accessing the care we need,” said CDPH Acting Commissioner Allison Arwady, MD, MPH. “We’ve developed a set of strategies grounded in data and focused on equity to help fix that system, directing resources to the communities most in need.”

CDPH’s 2018 Healthy Chicago survey found that about 178,000 Chicago adults needed mental health treatment at some point in the previous year but did not receive services. This lack of access can be devastating for vulnerable residents—including our young people and communities of color.

The City’s Framework will provide a new level of intensive supports for youth and young adults who are at the highest risk of violence. These investments will support the delivery of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) while ensuring a trauma-informed response to homicides so residents impacted by violence are more easily connected to mental health care when they need it most. These efforts align with the Mayor’s comprehensive violence reduction strategy, which works to reach individuals at the highest risk of violence.

“I strongly support Mayor Lightfoot’s mental health framework. It’s bold. It’s equitable. And it reflects the importance of partnering with community organizations doing important work across Chicago,” said Joel K. Johnson, President of HRDI and Executive Vice President of Friend Health, a network of community health centers providing primary and behavioral healthcare to underserved populations. “Instead of going it alone, the City of Chicago is going big by leveraging the city’s large network of services.”

The City developed the Framework in tandem with advocates, experts, community providers and other stakeholders—assessing Chicago’s mental healthcare system to identify gaps and how they can best be filled. Additionally, the City’s plan establishes an enhanced data collection on services throughout Chicago, allowing the City to better align efforts with County, State and over 100 publicly-funded community providers to better identify services gaps and allocate services more efficiently. The Framework for Mental Health Equity is the result of those efforts and calls for a major shift in how services are coordinated across the city.

Numerous health care experts and stakeholders have come out in support of the Mayor’s plan, including:

- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
- Bobby Wright Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center
- Bright Star Community Outreach



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- Center for Childhood Resilience
- Chicago Board of Health President Carolyn Lopez
- Erie Family Health Centers
- Esperanza Health Centers
- Friend Health
- Habilitative Systems Inc.
- Heartland Health Centers
- Howard Brown Health
- Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Chicago
- Thresholds
- Trilogy Behavioral Health
- Access Community Health Network
- Lawndale Christian Health Center

“Mental health affects each and every Chicagoan, and we can no longer look the other way while residents suffer in silence,” said 6th Ward Alderman Sawyer, Chairman of the Committee on Health and Human Relations. “We have an obligation to ensure all Chicagoans are connected with the mental health services they need and deserve. With these investments announced today, we’re making a down payment on our promise to live up to that obligation.”

The City’s new plan will also include an anti-stigma campaign and improvements in the mental health helpline that residents can access through 311 and other measures to ensure the residents who need care are connected to it.

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