

Crisis Care Improvement and Suicide Prevention Act of 2020

Challenge: As our nation continues to fight the opioid epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic, mental illness has also reached epidemic levels.

- In a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll, 45% of adults in the United States reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress over the virus.
- 28% of people experiencing significant disruption in their lives due to coronavirus reported major negative mental health impacts, compared to 15% of those experiencing just some disruption and 10% of those with little or no disruption.

This is especially concerning as communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and face significant disruption.

- In Illinois, African Americans represent 15% of the population and nearly 30% of COVID-19 deaths.
- Hispanics represent 17% of the population in Illinois, but more than 30% of people with COVID-19.

Additionally, emergency departments and the criminal justice system do not have the capacity—with existing resources and healthcare professional shortages—to address the needs of the rapidly growing number of individuals with behavioral health conditions. Several pre-COVID-19 statistics underscore these points.

- In 2017, 150,000 Americans died from alcohol or drug-induced fatalities and suicide. Nearly a third—more than 47,000—were suicides.
- Today 15% of men and 30% of women in county jails have severe mental illnesses.
- From 2016 to 2018, more than one-quarter of hospital emergency department “frequent users” in Illinois were patients with presenting or underlying behavioral health conditions.
- Use of crisis facilities and interventions saved hospital emergency departments an estimated \$37 million in avoided costs in Maricopa County, AZ in 2016 and saved the equivalent of 37 police officer full time equivalents (FTE).

Legislation: That is why Reps. Bustos and Wild are introducing the Crisis Care Improvement and Suicide Prevention Act of 2020. This legislation would direct states to utilize five percent of their Mental Health Block Grant for crisis care services—once funding for the program is increased by five percent nationally—allowing states to upgrade crisis care programs and strategies. Crisis care services include the following:

- **Crisis Call Centers** – Call centers that coordinate and connect patients and families to behavioral health services in real time.
- **Mobile Crisis Services** - 24/7 mobile crisis services travel to patients offering outreach, support and referrals to appropriate care when and where people are in crisis.
- **Crisis Stabilization Programs** – Stabilization programs offering acute or sub-acute care in a hospital or facility for individuals who need support and observation.

What is the Mental Health Block Grant? Administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the federal Mental Health Block Grant provides funds to States to support mental illness prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services. In Fiscal Year 2020, the program was funded at \$722.5 million. After becoming law, this legislation will go into effect once the program receives \$757.5 million in funding, a five percent increase.