

# Mental Health Matters

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Section on Mental Health Law

## Editor's Note

BY SANDRA M. BLAKE

Since Mental Health America introduced the observance in the United States in 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has drawn national attention to the struggles that the millions of Americans who have mental health issues confront on a daily basis. During Mental Health Awareness Month, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) "actively

participates in this national movement, dedicated to eradicating stigma, extending support, fostering public education and advocating for policies that prioritize the well-being of individuals and families affected by mental illness."

Other national organizations, such as Mental Health America and Substance

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## Mental Health – The Key to the Kingdom

BY ROBERT E. WELLS, JR.

The title is neither politically correct nor entirely accurate, but it contains more than a grain of truth and it may have prompted your curiosity. Why we are here, who we are, and how can we better understand ourselves and improve how we interact with others are intriguing and worthwhile inquiries and endeavors. Have you ever considered the role of mental health on your own life, on your loved ones, on your community, or society in general?

Although fleeting, and too often ineffectual or underfunded, Congress, the Illinois legislature, and the Illinois Supreme Court have. Congress passed the

Community Mental Health Act of 1963. The Illinois legislature has passed considerable legislation affecting mental health over the last five years. The Illinois Supreme Court has established the Advisory Committee for Justice and Mental Health Planning; Illinois College Committee on Probation Education; Committee on Equality (Equal Justice); Committee on Juvenile Courts; and the Court Probation Policy Advisory Board. Equally as significant, the Illinois Supreme Court has adopted a policy on the Access for People with Disabilities, provided the Illinois legislature a list of its decisions

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Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) have prepared downloadable tool kits to help individuals, families and communities honor the observance. Some examples from the

SAMHSA tool kit are included in this newsletter.

Let's keep the observance going year-round!■

## Mental Health – The Key to the Kingdom

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which “the General Assembly may wish to consider,” and established the Illinois Mental Health Task Force (IMHTF). The Illinois Supreme Court noted it was in a unique position to lead change by following the recommendations and using the resources developed by the National Judicial Task Force to examine the state court’s response to mental health concerns in Illinois.

In this last capacity the Illinois Supreme Court appointed Scott Block as the state court behavioral health administrator within its Administrative Office. Scott Block (sblock@illinoiscourts.gov) has worked to implement an educational and training program that brings awareness to the courts (as “convener” and “leaders”) to intercept models fostered by the National Judicial Task Force. This section council commends the Illinois Supreme Court and Mr. Block on their efforts.

The intercept model adopted increases the awareness of mental health, substance use abuse, and the consequences thereof on our criminal justice system, including the use of mental health tools to assist, supplement and enhance existing policies and procedures.

This section council will undertake an increased effort to keep ISBA members apprised of the activities and progress of state court behavioral health administration.

*Mental Health Matters* is a publication of the Mental Health Section Council, but it depends on its members to alert the ISBA and its members of developments, recommendations, and experiences warranting commendation, attention, or redress. The mission of our Section Council

involves more than simply following legislation and reporting on caselaw. It reads as follows:

- To review proposed and existing statutes, legislation, rules and court decisions affecting persons with mental illnesses, substance abuse disorders and make recommendations to the Board of Governors concerning these matters.
- To provide training and education to lawyers concerning the interaction between mental illness and the law and legal practice.
- To provide information to mental health professionals and the public concerning laws and rules affecting persons with mental illnesses.
- To collaborate with other professional and advocacy organizations to promote awareness of mental illnesses and mental health and to increase mental health services.

Future issues of this newsletter will include: responses to your inquiries, mental health tips, rudimentary understanding of cognitive behavioral therapy, impact of social media upon mental health, and how to better understand why you are who you are. If you are not a member of the Mental Health Section, please consider joining.■

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## Mental Health Matters

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To subscribe, visit [www.isba.org/sections](http://www.isba.org/sections) or call 217-525-1760.

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Articles are prepared as an educational service to members of ISBA. They should not be relied upon as a substitute for individual legal research.

The articles in this newsletter are not intended to be used and may not be relied on for penalty avoidance.

# SAMHSA Announces Art of Recovery Project

On May 7, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is launching the 2024 Art of Recovery project. This initiative highlights the impact of art on mental health and substance use recovery, showcasing how creative expression can serve as a pathway to solace, healing, and empowerment. The project solicits submissions, including artwork and a brief description of the artist's inspiration, from artists with lived or living recovery experience.

"We invite people with lived experience to submit photographs, paintings, drawings or mixed media artwork that is meaningful to them and their journey," said Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the leader of SAMHSA. "While the process of creation has long been recognized as a therapeutic tool, it can also serve to inspire others. The Art of Recovery project

works to raise the voices of people with lived experience and illustrate the possibilities in recovery, hope and healing."

Submissions are open May 7 to June 28, with categories for youth 13-17 and adults 18+. Artists may submit in two categories: painting, drawing or mixed media, and photography.

Selected entries will be posted on SAMHSA's website as part of an online exhibit, *Gallery of Hope: Artistic Expressions of Recovery Across the Nation*. The online gallery will launch in September and run throughout the month to celebrate National Recovery Month.

Up to 150 youth submissions and 350 adult submissions will be posted in the virtual gallery. Artists may submit one piece of art along with a brief description of the inspiration behind the artwork. Submissions will be reviewed based on originality, creativity, and how well the entry expresses

the theme.

In 2023, SAMHSA published *Recovery from Substance Use and Mental Health Problems Among Adults in the United States*, which indicates that over 70 percent of people (over 50 million) who identified as ever having a mental health and/or substance use problem were in recovery. ■

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*The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes.*

## \$46.8 Million in Behavioral Health Funding Opportunities to Advance Unity Agenda as Part of Mental Health Awareness Month

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), recently announced \$46.8 million in notices of funding opportunities to promote youth mental health, grow the behavioral health workforce, improve access to culturally competent behavioral care across the country, and strengthen peer recovery and recovery support. Tackling the mental health

crisis and beating the opioid epidemic are key pillars in the nation's Unity Agenda.

The May 8 announcement will help communities transform how they address behavioral health.

This critical funding supports the government's efforts to address the mental health and overdose crises, as well as furthers HHS's Overdose Prevention Strategy. The grants additionally fuel each of SAMHSA's strategic priorities for the agency: preventing

substance use and overdose, enhancing access to suicide prevention and mental health services, promoting resilience and emotional health for children, youth, and families, integrating behavioral and physical health care, and strengthening the behavioral health workforce.

"Continuing to invest in informed and equitable approaches to mental health and substance use is essential to the health and well-being of individuals and families,"

said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. “These grants directly impact the behavioral health of communities around the nation and are a critical part of the commitment ... to enhancing accessibility of evidence-based, effective behavioral health care services.”

“We are pleased to announce nearly \$50 million in funding opportunities, a significant investment in strengthening the quality of and access to behavioral health services and supports across the country,” said Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the leader of SAMHSA. “This funding will improve the quality of care for underserved populations, support suicide prevention and early intervention strategies for young people, make significant contributions to the integration of primary and behavioral health care, and provide essential training and technical assistance to those working in the field.”

The funding opportunities invest in a range of critical behavioral health efforts:

- **Minority Fellowship Program** – \$15.4 million – This program aims to reduce health disparities and improve behavioral health care outcomes for racial and ethnic populations. The program also seeks to train and better prepare behavioral health practitioners to more effectively treat and serve people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- **Cooperative Agreements for the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Program** – \$14.9 million – This program supports states and tribes with implementing youth (up to age 24) suicide prevention and early intervention strategies in schools, educational institutions, juvenile justice systems, substance use and mental health programs, foster care systems, pediatric health programs, and other child and youth-serving organizations.
- **Addiction Technology Transfer Centers Cooperative Agreements** –

\$9.0 million – This program develops and strengthens the specialized behavioral health care and primary health care workforce that provides substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and recovery support services. This is done by accelerating the adoption and implementation of evidence-based and promising SUD treatment and recovery-oriented practices and services, heightening the awareness, knowledge, and skills of the workforce that addresses the needs of people with substance use or other co-occurring physical and behavioral health conditions, and fostering regional and national alliances among culturally diverse practitioners, researchers, policy makers, funders, and the recovery community.

- **The National Center for Mental Health Dissemination, Implementation and Sustainment Cooperative Agreement** – \$7.5 million – The National Center for Mental Health Dissemination, Implementation, and Sustainment will build the capacity of grant recipients, as well as organizations that oversee or directly provide mental health services, to improve the implementation of evidence-based change management processes that guide mental health services.

Together these, and other HHS programs, are making historic investments in how we address mental health and substance use needs across America.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text [988](tel:988) or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org). To learn how to get support for mental health, drug or alcohol issues, visit [FindSupport.gov](https://FindSupport.gov). If you are ready to locate a treatment facility or provider, you can go directly to [FindTreatment.gov](https://FindTreatment.gov) or call [800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:8006624357). ■

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