

THE WHITE HOUSE

FACT SHEET: PRESIDENT OBAMA APPLAUDS COMMITMENTS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL HEALTH AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

Today, at the National Conference on Mental Health, the President applauded the dozens of commitments made by organizations representing media, educators, health care providers, faith communities, and foundations to increase understanding and awareness of mental health.

The Obama Administration has taken a number of steps to raise awareness and improve care for Americans experiencing mental health issues, including expanding mental health coverage for millions of Americans through the Affordable Care Act, improving access to mental health services for veterans and supporting initiatives to help educators recognize and refer students who show signs of mental illness.

The National Conference on Mental Health is designed to increase understanding and awareness of mental health. As part of this effort, today the Administration is launching mentalhealth.gov, a new, consumer-friendly website with clear and concise tools to help with the basics of mental health, the signs of mental illness, how to talk about mental health, and how to get help. The website also includes a series of videos featuring celebrities and ordinary Americans whose lives have been touched by mental illness.

Recognizing that the government cannot do this alone, the Administration applauds commitments from private sector and non-profit organizations, including in five key areas:

1) Launching new efforts to raise public awareness through television, radio, social media campaigns, and other platforms.

Commitments include:

- The **National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)**, representing local television and radio stations and broadcast networks throughout the country, is creating a national public service campaign to reduce the stigma around mental illness. The multiplatform campaign, launching this summer, will include TV and radio ads, online ads and resources and a robust social media platform to raise awareness – specifically among 13-24 year olds, their friends and caregivers – that it’s okay to talk about mental health and help is available.
- **Blue Star Families**, a non-profit organization created by military families to strengthen military families and connect America to her military, is producing a second series of public service announcements entitled “This Country Cares,” featuring country music stars telling our military heroes with mental health problems that they are not alone and encouraging them to seek help if they are struggling with these issues.

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- As part of their *Love is Louder* campaign, **MTV** and **The Jed Foundation** will promote help seeking and challenge the stigma surrounding mental health by encouraging members of MTV's audience to take any action that supports their or a friend's emotional health, and then share that action with @LoveisLouder. MTV will amplify the best responses through several of its social media channels, which in total reach nearly 160 million fans and followers.
- **The Entertainment Software Association** and leading video game companies **Activision Blizzard, Inc., Activision Publishing, Inc., Bethesda Softworks, Blizzard Entertainment Inc., and Microsoft Corporation** will promote consumer resources for mental health and wellness information through their consumer web sites and online communities, which reach tens of millions of people every month.
- Other organizations committing to help raise awareness through television, film, and social media include the **Entertainment Industries Council, Facebook, Google, SchoolTube, and Twitter.**

2) **Teaching students about mental health and helping adults who work with youth recognize early signs of mental health problems and refer kids to treatment.**

Commitments include:

- **The National Association of Secondary School Principals** has called on its 25,000 members -- middle and high school principals and assistant principals from across the country -- to hold an assembly on mental health awareness by the end of 2013.
- **The National Parent Teacher Association** is partnering with the **National Association of School Psychologists** to host a webinar for their members regarding mental health awareness. Topics will include how parents can talk to their children about mental health in an age-appropriate manner and start a dialogue on mental health in their children's schools or in PTA meetings.
- **The National Association of School Nurses**, which represents almost 16,000 nurses serving in schools nationwide, is developing a new online continuing education program on behavioral health for school nurses and sending its members an evidence-based checklist of steps to identify early signs of mental health problems and refer students and their families to treatment if needed.
- **YMCA of the USA** and the **American Psychological Association** will work together to develop educational tools and resources to help 18,000 full-time Y staff, as well as 49,000 summer employees who work with youth, to identify the signs of depression and other mental health problems in youth and refer them to appropriate resources. Each year, YMCAs serve about 9 million kids through programs like childcare, afterschool, summer camps, and more.

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- Other organizations making commitments to talk with young people about mental health or educate the adults who work with them include the **American Council on Education, American Federation of Teachers, American Psychological Association, American School Counselor Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, National Association of School Psychologists, National Education Association, National Panhellenic Conference, North American Interfraternity Conference, School Social Work Association of America, and Skype in the classroom.**

3) Giving health care providers the tools they need to screen for mental health problems and encouraging them to lead efforts to raise awareness in their communities.

Commitments include:

- In a new effort, the **American Medical Association** and the **American Psychiatric Association** are partnering to disseminate educational materials developed by the APA to help physicians in all specialties better integrate mental health screenings into their practices, reduce misperceptions of mental illness, and direct patients to additional mental health services when needed.
- The **National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems** is developing and disseminating to its members materials that encourage them to promote access to mental health services and work in their hospital systems to decrease misconceptions about mental illness. Additionally, NAPH is working with its members to host a series of roundtables to engage communities across the country in conversations about mental health.
- Other organizations committing to disseminate information to their members or encourage them to lead new conversations in their communities include the **American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Hospital Association, the American Psychological Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Children’s Hospital Association, the Federation of American Hospitals, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, and the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems.**

4) Convening experts, philanthropic and civic leaders to identify innovative ways to reduce negative attitudes and perceptions about mental illness and improve access to treatment at the local level.

Commitments include:

- Civic leaders across the country are joining with philanthropic partners to host community conversations moderated by trained, neutral facilitators to discuss how to raise awareness of mental health and make sure others in their communities get the help they need. The first community conversations will take place in

Sacramento, Birmingham, Albuquerque, Kansas City and Washington, D.C. To help raise the profile of these conversations, **the National Football League** will send former players trained in responding to mental health issues to participate.

- **Give an Hour** will lead a collaborative initiative with **America’s Promise Alliance**, the **Aspen Institute**, the **Case Foundation** and the **Clinton Global Initiative** to identify successful community-based models of prevention and intervention that have been shown to improve mental health and psychological well-being, and develop a comprehensive strategy for broader adoption of these effective models. They will start by convening veterans and their families, as well as traditional veterans’ service organizations and other groups that provide mental health services to this population, to discuss best practices for reaching out to veterans and their families about mental health.

5) Launching new conversations in our houses of worship and other faith-based institutions to help people recognize mental health problems and access the treatment they need.

Faith groups from across the country have committed to launch new conversations on mental health by taking steps such as:

- Including a message about mental health in a worship service or other event, and providing congregants with bulletin inserts on mental health issues.
- Developing and disseminating toolkits with resources such as discussion starters to help members continue the conversation about mental health outside of worship services.
- Organizing a session on mental health awareness at an upcoming national conference.

Denominations and faith groups that are pledging to take action in their community as part of a national dialogue include: **African Methodist Episcopal Church Connectional Health Commission; American Association of Pastoral Counselors; American Muslim Health Professionals; Catholic Charities USA; Church of God in Christ; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Interfaith Network on Mental Illness; Islamic Relief USA; Lutheran Services in America; National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated; National Episcopal Health Ministries; Pathways to Promise; The Potter’s House; Progressive National Baptist Convention; The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; The Samaritan Institute; Seventh-Day Adventist Church - North American Division; Sikh Council on Religion and Education; United Church of Christ; United Methodist Church; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.**

For a complete list of commitments from private sector and non-profit groups, click [HERE](#).