

Governor Phil Murphy

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy Unveils Playbook for Governors to Address Nation's Youth Mental Health Crisis

07/13/2023

"Strengthening Youth Mental Health: A Governor's Playbook" Includes Four Key Pillars and 35 Nonpartisan Policy Recommendations

Atlantic City, New Jersey – During the opening session of the National Governors Association (NGA) Annual Meeting, NGA Chair New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy unveiled "Strengthening Youth Mental Health: A Governor's Playbook." As Chair of the NGA, Governor Murphy sought to harness the bipartisan efforts and national focus on youth mental health and made "Strengthening Youth Mental Health" the focus of his year-long NGA Chair's Initiative (https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nf4xqj/fd1rrbm/fdxoy4_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!NOSpOC0SXkESOnSKzVXHoTcEJfg7UtdaeC0mMKRdNvFMLtanWdtIYMGNo). To create the Playbook, Governor Murphy brought together 500 stakeholders – including youth, Governors, and other experts – at four convenings across the country to discuss the current state of youth mental health systems, best practices, and implementable, impactful solutions for all states.

"America's youth mental health crisis is a complex issue that transcends both party and geographic lines. Over the past year, we have traveled across the country and spent countless hours meeting with those on the front lines – young people, parents, caregivers, educators, and community leaders – to discuss innovative approaches, thoughtful programs, and effective models for addressing youth mental health," **said Governor Murphy**. "Together, these form the basis of our Playbook that states, policymakers, and stakeholders can use to strengthen youth mental health across the country. The pages of this Playbook contain examples of successful policies and initiatives that use this all-hands approach to address youth mental health needs, and it is our hope that more states will implement similar policies to help our youth thrive."

The Strengthening Youth Mental Health Initiative consists of four pillars that address the continuum of youth mental health—helping states to address the needs of youth in crisis today, while ensuring that systems focus on holistically supporting youth mental well-being to help future generations succeed. The four pillars are:

1. **Addressing prevention and building resilience** by supporting youth with the necessary tools to respond to stressors and challenges, reducing the risk of mental health conditions, and proactively identifying and managing existing conditions to prevent crises.
2. **Increasing awareness and reducing stigma** by promoting awareness of mental health knowledge and resources, and decreasing the social, self, and structural stigma around youth mental health challenges.
3. **Ensuring access and affordability of quality treatment and care** by removing the barriers to care, including unaffordable costs, lack of insurance coverage, and a depleted workforce to ensure that high-quality, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant care is accessible to youth in appropriate places, spaces, and timeframes to meet their needs.
4. **Training and supporting caregivers and educators** by expanding training and supports so that those caring for and interacting with youth daily have the understanding and tools to identify mental health needs to access relevant supports.

The Playbook breaks down each of these pillars into a total of 13 priority areas that can help Governors zero in on different facets of the system. Each priority is further broken down into a total of 35 specific, nonpartisan policy opportunities for Governors that leverage their unique abilities across agenda setting, allocating funding, supporting legislation, and orchestrating stakeholders. The ultimate goal of the Playbook is to help Governors understand the best practices and ideal status of youth mental health systems through examples of replicable and impactful solutions that are already underway across the country, with context for Governors to adapt and implement them in their states.

New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy led a related initiative building on her extensive work to improve maternal and infant health. She also unveiled a policy playbook during today's panel discussion titled, "Tackling the Maternal and Infant Health Crisis: A Governor's Playbook."

View *"Strengthening Youth Mental Health: A Governor's Playbook"* (https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nf4xqj/fd1rrbm/v5xoy4_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!NOSpOC0SXkESOnSKzVXHoTcEJfg7UtdaeC0mMKRdNvFMLtanWdtIYMGNo) and the *"Tackling the Maternal and Infant Health Crisis: A Governor's Playbook"* (https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nf4xqj/fd1rrbm/byyoy4_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!NOSpOC0SXkESOnSKzVXHoTcEJfg7UtdaeC0mMKRdNvFMLtanWdtIYMGNo) on NGA's website.

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