

Bradley Hospital awarded five-year, \$8.6M federal grant

Funds aimed at mental and behavioral health services in schools

EAST PROVIDENCE – Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital has been awarded a five-year, \$8.6 million federal grant to help provide mental and behavioral health services in schools across the state, Gov. **DANIEL J. MCKEE**, Lt. Gov. **SABINA MATOS**, R.I. Education Commissioner **ANGELICA INFANTE-GREEN** and R.I. Department of Children, Youth and Families Acting Director **KEVIN AUCCOIN** announced recently.

The funding, from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will support Bradley Hospital in participating in the Project Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education – or Project AWARE – partnership with DCYF and the R.I. Department of Education. State officials say the project's purpose is to increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youths and to provide training for school personnel to detect mental health issues, respond to them, and connect the affected students' families to needed services.

The funding will help continue running Project AWARE programs in schools in Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket for four more years, state officials said. The program in these districts, state officials say, will annually impact more than 35,000 students and 3,000 school personnel as the partners implement professional and paraprofessional training, mental health-related promotions, awareness, prevention, intervention and resilience activities to ensure that students have access and are connected to appropriate and effective behavioral health services.

In a statement, Bradley Hospital President Dr. **HENRY SACHS** said too many children and young adults are dealing with varying mental health issues, such as depression, addiction and substance uses, that is impacting their well-being. He said it is "imperative" that schools are supported in having "culturally-competent and developmentally appropriate mental wellness programs that can connect students in need to effective behavioral health services and interventions." ❖

NIH grant to examine universal postpartum depression for moms

PROVIDENCE – Maternal mental health is a critical public health component of perinatal care and maternal safety. Postpartum depression can have lasting consequences for the mother, child, and family. After each birth, 1 in 7 women will experience postpartum depression.

A team of researchers from Michigan State University, Care New England Health System, and Henry Ford Health is collaborating on a \$6.2 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) mental health research grant, "The ROSE Scale-Up Study: Informing a decision about ROSE as universal postpartum depression prevention."

The Reach Out, Stand Strong, Essentials for New Mothers (ROSE) program, funded by NIH through the end of 2022, has served low-income women at 98 prenatal clinics. Study findings show that ROSE prevents half of the cases of postpartum depression. Additionally, health care and community agencies find it is more feasible to provide ROSE as universal prevention for all women.

"The newly funded program will be the first study to look at the effectiveness of postpartum depression among a general population of women and women screening negative for postpartum depression risk," said **CARON ZLOTNICK, PhD**, one of two PIs on the grant and Professor of Psychiatry, OB/GYN and Internal Medicine at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Director of Research for the Department of Medicine at Women and Infants Hospital. "If we find the intervention is effective, we can work to scale up the program, strengthen families while supporting moms, and reduce costs within the healthcare system." ❖

VA report shows drop in Veteran suicides; awards suicide-prevention grants

WASHINGTON – On Sept. 19th, the Department of Veterans Affairs released the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, which shows that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.

As a part of VA's comprehensive efforts to end Veteran suicide, VA also announced the grantees for the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, a first-of-its-kind program that provides VA funding for local suicide prevention programs, and the finalists for Mission Daybreak, a suicide prevention grand challenge. The SSG Fox award provides \$750,000 to the Rhode Island Department of Health, applicable to the Veteran's Integrated Service Network (VISN) 1, New England Healthcare System.

These efforts are key aspects of VA's 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and the Biden-Harris administration's plan for Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide.

Key findings from the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report include:

- In 2019 and 2020, Veteran suicides decreased in consecutive years by 307 and 343 deaths – the biggest decrease in the suicide count and rate since 2001.
- From 2018 to 2020, the age- and sex-adjusted suicide rate among Veterans fell by 9.7%
- Among women Veterans, the age-adjusted suicide rate fell by 14.1%, compared to 8.4% among non-Veteran women. The age-adjusted suicide rate for women Veterans in 2020 was the lowest since 2013, and the age-adjusted suicide rate for Veteran men was the lowest since 2016.
- From 2019 to 2020, Veteran suicide rates fell across all racial groups.
- Comparisons of trends in Veteran suicide and COVID-19 mortality over the course of 2020 and across Veteran demographic and clinical subgroups did not indicate an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Veteran suicide mortality. ❖

CDC opening applications for monkeypox vaccine equity pilot program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Local, state, and territorial health departments, as well as tribal governments and local non-governmental organizations, can partner together and begin submitting requests to access monkeypox vaccine through the recently announced Monkeypox Vaccine Equity Pilot Program. This new pilot program is intended to reach populations that may face barriers to monkeypox vaccination, which may include differences in language, location of vaccination sites, vaccine hesitancy, mistrust of government, lack of access to on-line scheduling technology, accessibility/disability issues, immigration status, and stigma.

“We have a responsibility to address inequities that have been highlighted by this outbreak, and this program will help make a difference,” said CDC Director **ROCHELLE WALENSKY, MD, MPH**. “This outbreak is affecting members of the gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men community at an unequal rate, and it has disproportionately affected the Black and Hispanic communities. Distributing monkeypox vaccines in a way that addresses and reduces these disparities is the goal of this program and is a high priority for CDC and our public health partners.”

Up to 50,000 doses of JYNNEOS vaccine have been allocated for the Monkeypox Vaccine Equity Pilot program. Successful proposals will demonstrate new, innovative ways to reach populations that are most affected by monkeypox based on local or national data. Projects should prioritize groups:

- with risk factors that increase their chances of getting or spreading monkeypox,
- who are over-represented among monkeypox cases and less likely to be vaccinated, and
- whose barriers to vaccination may be addressed by the activities proposed.

Special consideration will be given to projects addressing disparities among Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people who face barriers in accessing vaccines. Examples include pop-ups and other events associated with community-based organizations (CBOs) or clinics that work with MSM and transgender people, especially those who are Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino, who are not reached by current allocations or vaccine administration channels.

Local health departments and organizations interested in applying should contact their state or territorial health departments or tribal governments. More information, including details on the application, can be found [here](#). ❖

Providence College establishes School of Nursing and Health Sciences

PROVIDENCE – For the first time in its 105-year-history, Providence College will offer academic programs in nursing and health sciences through a newly established School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The Rhode Island Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education granted formal approval to the college on Monday, September 12, for a new bachelor of science in nursing degree program. It is the first bachelor’s in nursing program approved by the state in a decade.

In addition to the nursing major, the new school – which was formally established in the spring of 2022 – will offer a bachelor’s degree in health sciences, along with the existing health policy and management major.

The college will begin enrolling students for the new programs in the fall of 2023. The nursing major is expected to be added soon to the Common Application for students applying to the Class of 2027. Applicants already are able to select the health sciences major.

The inaugural dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences is **KYLE J. MCINNIS, ScD**. McInnis previously was provost at Johnson & Wales University and led the establishment of a new School of Health Sciences, with a nursing program, at Merrimack University. McInnis was recruited in November 2021 to spearhead the new school with the charge of developing health programs that are “uniquely PC.”

“A PC nursing degree will be distinctive because of a mission-focused approach that is aligned with our Catholic and Dominican identity,” McInnis said. “We will offer transformative learning experiences aimed at caring for the whole human being, to ensure that students gain competencies that address physical, mental, and spiritual health for all people entrusted to their care.”

Integrated within the college’s liberal arts curriculum, the school will provide students options to explore areas of study such as medical humanities and dual language courses complemented by immersive community and global health experiences gained locally and abroad. ❖

BCBSRI certifies 21 new LGBTQ safe zones

PROVIDENCE – Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI) has newly designated 21 healthcare sites as LGBTQ Safe Zones, certifying that the providers have demonstrated care designed to meet the specific needs of LGBTQ patients.

More than 70 practices have achieved BCBSRI Safe Zone designation since the program began in 2016 and this unusually large class of certified providers was bolstered by the commitment of Coastal Medical. All but two of the new Safe Zones are affiliated with Coastal Medical, a primary care driven practice of more than 125 providers serving 120,000 patients.

“We applaud Coastal Medical for taking the initiative to join our Safe Zone program and for demonstrating to their patients that providing quality care to LGBTQ patients is a priority. Coastal’s participation greatly expands the program’s reach to LGBTQ patients across Rhode Island.” said **MATT COLLINS, MD, MBA**, executive vice president and chief medical officer for BCBSRI. “Safe Zones facilitate access to affirming care for this under-served community with specific healthcare needs, one that has historically struggled with healthcare interactions, and has often forgone necessary regular care due to feelings of alienation, stress, frustration and fear.”

A member of the Lifespan health system, Coastal Medical has more than 20 medical offices across Rhode Island, two of which had previously been designated Safe Zones.

The following are the latest Coastal offices designated as Safe Zones: Bald Hill Pediatrics, Cardiology Specialists, Coastal365, Coastal Family Medicine, Coastal’s West Exchange Street Lab, East Greenwich Primary Care, East Providence Internal Medicine, Garden City Primary Care, Greenville Internal Medicine, Hillside Family Medicine, Lincoln Primary Care, Musculoskeletal Health Program, Narragansett Family Medicine, Newport Primary Care, Providence/Edgewood Primary Care, Pulmonary & Internal Specialists, Pulmonary & Sleep Medicine Specialists,

Toll Gate Pediatrics, Wakefield Primary Care, and Warren Avenue Primary Care. Coastal’s Narragansett Bay Pediatrics and Waterman Pediatrics practices were also designated as Safe Zones previously.

The two other new LGBTQ Safe Zones are:

- Fig Tree Acupuncture + Wellness: Based in Warwick, Fig Tree is committed to helping patients achieve optimal health through holistic education and empowerment. Fig Tree Acupuncture specializes in gut health, anxiety, insomnia and overall well-being.
- The Memory and Aging Program at Butler Hospital: Established in 1997, the program is affiliated with The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and has played a major role in advancing the study and treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia.

The designation of these two sites, along with the Coastal locations, further diversifies the breadth of Safe Zones, which include primary care, behavioral health, oral health, child and family services, and organizations serving individuals who have experienced sexual assault, domestic abuse and substance abuse.

Certification requirements for BCBSRI LGBTQ Safe Zones include staff training specific to the care of LGBTQ patients, protection for patients and staff from discrimination based on gender identity or expression, gender neutral bathrooms, inclusive forms and procedures, and a public commitment to connecting with and serving the LGBTQ community.

BCBSRI solicits applications and designates new LGBTQ Safe Zones twice a year. To learn more about the program, or if you are a provider or practice looking to become certified as a BCBSRI LGBTQ Safe Zone, visit:

bcsri.com/providers/safezone-program. ❖

AMA: Physician burnout rate spikes to new height

New study concludes COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated long-standing system issues that drive burnout

CHICAGO – The burnout rate among physicians in the United States spiked dramatically during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a newly published study in Mayo Clinic Proceedings. Researchers found that 2020 marked the end of a six-year period of decline in the overall rate of work-induced burnout among physicians. By the end of 2021, after 21-months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the physician burnout rate spiked to a new height that was greater than previously monitored by researchers.

“While the worst days of COVID-19 pandemic are hopefully behind us, there is an urgent need to attend to physicians who put everything into our nation’s response to COVID-19, too often at the expense of their own well-being,” said AMA President **JACK RESNECK Jr., MD**. “The sober findings from the new research demand urgent action as outlined in the

AMA’s Recovery Plan for America’s Physicians, which focuses on supporting physicians, removing obstacles and burdens that interfere with patient care, and prioritizing physician well-being as essential requirements to achieving national health goals.”

The new physician burnout research builds on landmark studies conducted at regular intervals between 2011 and 2021 by researchers from the AMA, Mayo Clinic, and Stanford Medicine. Together, these studies found the overall prevalence of burnout among U.S. physicians was 62.8% in 2021 compared with 38.2% in 2020, 43.9% in 2017, 54.4% in 2014, and 45.5% in 2011. Each study consistently demonstrated that the overall prevalence of occupational burnout among physicians were higher relative to the U.S. workforce.

Since 2012, the AMA has led the national conversation on solving the physician burnout crisis and advocated for new thinking and solutions that acknowledge physicians need support, system reforms, and burden reduction. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of the drivers of physician burnout. Research has shown that due to COVID-related stress, 1 in 5 physicians intend to leave their current practice within 2 years.

The AMA’s ongoing work to mitigate physician burnout, as exemplified by the Recovery Plan for America’s Physicians, strives to attack the dysfunction in health care by removing the obstacles and burdens that interfere with patient care. The AMA website offers physicians and health systems a choice of cutting-edge tools, information and resources to help rekindle a joy in medicine. ❖

Butler opens infusion suite for memory and aging program

PROVIDENCE – On Sept. 20th, Butler Hospital’s leadership team and staff held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil its newly constructed infusion suite for the hospital’s Memory and Aging Program.

The new suite, located in the Weld Building on the Butler Hospital campus, was designed with vital input from clinical staff and others who will use the space. The bright, spacious and modern facility includes a refurbished reception area configured for improved patient comfort and customer service, a more spacious and efficient nurse’s station within sightline to patients for improved safety, and a lab processing room conveniently located adjacent to the nurse’s station. The new space also includes a large treatment room, a new added feature that provides an improved experience for both staff and patients while conducting blood draws, EKG testing and vital sign screening.

“Our new state-of-the-art infusion suite offers patients a relaxing environment while receiving the compassionate care they’ve come to expect from Butler Hospital,” said **MARY MARRAN**, president and COO, Butler Hospital.

She added, “I really hope that this new facility will make living with Alzheimer’s disease a little easier for patients who deserve a treatment experience that decreases their stress levels, and puts them more at ease.”

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, **STEPHEN SALLOWAY, MD, MS**, founder of the program, said, “This new space is critical



Eight new infusion bays offer more privacy, space and comfort for patients to relax while investigational medications are administered, as well as an additional chair to allow caregivers to comfortably stay with the patient throughout the infusion process.

[PHOTO COURTESY OF CARE NEW ENGLAND]

for growth, providing the expanded modern facility necessary for carrying out cutting-edge research. We are so grateful to our donors and supporters for helping to make this a reality. Together with our many study volunteers we are opening the modern era for the treatment of Alzheimer’s.” ❖

CODAC, first responders included in prevention grants

PROVIDENCE – As drug overdose rates spike and a growing number of people seek treatment services for substance use disorder, CODAC Behavioral Healthcare, the largest non-profit, outpatient provider for opioid treatment in Rhode Island, is expanding its operations with the help of federal funds secured by U.S. Senators **JACK REED** and **SHELDON WHITEHOUSE**.

They joined **LINDA HURLEY**, President and CEO of CODAC Behavioral Healthcare, to discuss a new \$750,000 earmark for CODAC to support the renovation and modernization of a new flagship facility at 45 Royal Little Drive in Providence. CODAC's new headquarters will offer medical and administration services at this new, consolidated site which will allow for medical expansion due to necessity and patient need. CODAC, which serves about 5,000 people, has outgrown its current 14,000-square foot site on Huntington Avenue forcing some staff having to create work spaces out of closets.

Reed and Whitehouse also announced a new \$800,000 First Responders-Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Support Services Act Grant. This federal funding, which will be administered by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), trains and equips first responders – such as police, firefighters, paramedics and other volunteer organizations – on how to respond to overdose-related incidents, including how to administer overdose reversal medication naloxone. Between February 2020 and November 2021, RIDOH and its community partners distributed 10,000 doses of naloxone. Getting additional naloxone kits into the hands of first responders and community members will prevent fatal overdoses and save more lives. ❖

RI delegation announces \$11.3M to combat opioid epidemic, improve mental health

WASHINGTON, DC – In an effort to connect Rhode Islanders struggling with mental health issues, opioid use disorder, and other behavioral health issues to treatment, recovery and prevention services, U.S. Senators **JACK REED** and **SHELDON WHITEHOUSE** and Congressmen **JIM LANGEVIN** and **DAVID CICILLINE** announced on Sept. 26th \$11,371,485 in new federal grants for Rhode Island. Over \$7.4 million in federal State Opioid Response Grant funding will enhance statewide opioid addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Federal grants will also invest in local Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs), which provide access to quality mental health care to residents across the state.

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH) will receive \$7,443,492 to help prevent opioid addiction statewide, reduce the number of prescription drug/opioid overdoses, increase access to treatment and reduce unmet needs through prevention, treatment, and gather data on addiction treatment and recovery resources.

Newport County Community Mental Health, Gateway Healthcare, Inc., and **Thrive Behavioral Health, Inc.** will each receive \$1 million federal grants to improve community behavioral health services.

Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP) will receive \$928,000 to treat adults with opioid use disorder and provide behavioral health counseling services. ❖