

It's Time: Innovative Community Approaches to Children's Mental Health

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In June, NAMI and the Cigna Foundation joined forces to host a children's mental health forum—It's Time. The forum focused national attention on the need for increased innovative community programs for children and families. It featured national experts sharing how they have started and expanded community programs that improve the early identification of emerging mental illness and connect children and youth with effective programs and services.

One in five youth live with a mental health condition. On average eight to 10 years pass between the onset of symptoms to intervention. It's Time featured an array of national experts highlighting innovative community approaches to closing the gap and reaching children and families with mental health services and supports.

Mental illness can create tremendous challenges in a child's future. The forum featured national experts providing nuts-and-bolts descriptions of their programs. Dr. Glenace Edwall, Director of Children's Mental Health in Minnesota, described their school-linked mental health program and how it grew from a \$30,000 initial investment into a \$45 million program with services delivered to children in schools across the state. Edwall stressed the

**Mental Health Facts
CHILDREN & TEENS**

Fact: 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness

- 20% (Icon: 20%)
- 11% (Icon: 11%)
- 10% (Icon: 10%)
- 8% (Icon: 8%)

Impact

- 50% (Icon: 50%)
- 10 yrs (Icon: 10 yrs)
- 50% (Icon: 50%)
- 70% (Icon: 70%)

Suicide

- 3rd (Icon: 3rd)
- 90% (Icon: 90%)

Warning Signs

- (Icon: Warning Sign)

4 Things Parents Can Do

- (Icon: Parent/Child)
- (Icon: Clipboard)
- (Icon: Home)
- (Icon: Speech)

rics, shared innovative approaches to better address mental health in primary care. From a pediatric perspective, he emphasized the importance of continuing to increase mental health awareness as we work to expand the availability of mental health interventions.

Ingrid Donato, Mental Health Promotion Branch Chief in the Federal Center for Mental Health Services, covered bullying prevention. She focused on the heavy toll bullying takes on a child's self worth and stability.

Dr. Alvin Blank, an Addiction Medicine Specialist and Psychiatrist with Cigna, stressed the importance of building workforce capacity because most families wait three to six months for their child to see a psychiatrist. Dr. Barry Sarvet, a leading national expert described the innovative program they developed in Massachusetts to expand workforce capacity. That collaborative care program is now in more than 17 states.

Dr. Ken Duckworth, NAMI's Medical Director, engaged in a lively conversation with

importance of focusing on data collection and positive outcomes to expand programs.

Dr. John C. Duby, a leader with the American Academy of Pediat-

two youth advocates from NAMI Northern Virginia, Leah Ganssle and Esther Lee. Each shared their stories and commitment to raising the national dialogue on mental health and youth advocacy.