

The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use Names Eight Regions to Spearhead Employer Efforts to Improve Access to Effective Care

WASHINGTON – December 11, 2019 – The national steering committee for The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use – National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, American Psychiatric Association (APA), American Psychiatric Association Foundation (APAF) Center for Workplace Mental Health and Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute – has selected eight locations across the nation to implement its multi-stakeholder transformative initiative.

[Launched last month](#), The Path Forward has embarked on a five-year plan to execute a first-of-its-kind private sector approach to improve mental health and substance use care for Americans across the nation. As a key part of the initiative, the Regional Employer Stakeholder Engagement Team (RESET Regions) will leverage the influence of business coalitions, and their employer and other purchaser members, to work with health plans, health systems, medical and behavioral health providers, consultants and brokers to combat this public health crisis.

The RESET Regions and coalitions leading these efforts are:

- California – Pacific Business Group on Health and Silicon Valley Employers Forum
- Florida – Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value
- Kansas – Kansas Business Group on Health
- Maryland, District of Columbia and Northern Virginia – MidAtlantic Business Group on Health
- Minnesota – Minnesota Health Action Group
- New York City metro area including northern New Jersey and southern Connecticut – Northeast Business Group on Health
- Tennessee – Memphis Business Group on Health and HealthCare 21 Business Coalition
- Texas – Dallas Fort Worth Business Group on Health and Houston Business Coalition on Health

“The mental health and substance use system across the country is in crisis,” said Michael Thompson, National Alliance President and CEO. “The activities of the RESET Regions will be key to achieving and leveraging sustainable and measurable improvements to access, comprehensive care and parity. These employers are the primary financiers of the system and they will both set the tone and hold the stakeholders accountable for accomplishing these goals.”

A [report published last month](#) by Milliman found the current state of mental health and substance use treatment in America is dire and only getting worse. Results showed that patients were much more likely to resort to “out-of-network” providers for behavioral health treatment than for other conditions.

To overcome these issues, The Path Forward has identified Five Priority Strategies that constitute our nation’s best opportunity to transform behavioral healthcare at a population level and improve access to necessary early detection and appropriate treatment. These best practices include (1) improving access to “in-network” behavioral health specialists, (2) expanding use of the collaborative care model to integrate behavioral health into primary care, (3) implementing measurement-based care in both primary care and behavioral specialty care to improve quality and outcomes, (4) expanding tele-behavioral health, and (5) ensuring mental health parity compliance.

“This isn’t simply about greater access to care for mental health and substance use disorders; it’s about treating these medical conditions with the same urgency and care as other serious disorders, such as heart disease and diabetes, employing data-driven screening, measurement-based care, and cost-effective treatment,” said Andy Keller, PhD, President and CEO of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. “We know how to provide effective medical care, and we are going to now make that the norm for mental health care.”

The RESET Regions are already moving forward with coordinating their employer members and local stakeholders. [Learn more about The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use here.](#)

“The American Psychiatric Association has made improving access to mental health and substance use care in our nation a high priority,” said Saul Levin, MD, MPA, APA CEO and Medical Director and Chair of the APAF Board of Directors. “We maintain a firm commitment to ensuring that employees across the country and their families have access to affordable, timely and effective care, and join with our partners on The Path Forward to improve our nation’s mental health delivery system.”

About National Alliance

The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions is the only nonprofit, purchaser-led organization with a national and regional structure dedicated to driving health and healthcare value across the country. Our members represent more than 12,000 employers/purchasers and 45 million Americans spending over \$300 billion annually on healthcare. To learn more, visit nationalalliancehealth.org, connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association (APA), founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with more than 38,500 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses. APA’s vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information visit psychiatry.org.

About American Psychiatric Association Foundation Center for Workplace Mental Health

The American Psychiatric Association Foundation, a subsidiary of the APA, works to create a mentally healthy nation by advancing mental health, overcoming mental illness and eliminating stigma. The Center for Workplace Mental Health helps employers create a more supportive workplace for their employees and advance mental health at their organizations. For more information, visit workplacementalhealth.org.

About Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Since its public launch in 2014, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) has helped Texas legislators, government officials, members of the judiciary, and local leaders identify systemic mental health needs and solutions, quickly becoming Texas’s most trusted source for data-driven mental health policy. MMHPI is helping Texas leaders address the mental health crisis in our jails and emergency rooms, improve access to care for veterans and their families, shift the focus of new investments toward early intervention, and expand the mental health workforce. Learn more about MMHPI at texasstateofmind.org.

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