

News

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San Mateo County Mayors Launch Mental Health First Aid Training

Board of Supervisors provides funding to help mayors raise mental health awareness, increase access to services

Redwood City – Cities across San Mateo County are launching a program aimed at training residents to help others who may be experiencing a mental health crisis.

The program – Mental Health First Aid Training – prepares community members to intervene early and assist other adults or youth experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.

The announcement by the San Mateo County Mayors Mental Health Initiative kicks off May as Mental Health Month. This year's theme, #SMCTakeAction4MH, encourages taking steps to support mental wellness.

Redwood City Mayor Giselle Hale and San Carlos Mayor Sara McDowell brought together mayors from 16 cities across the county to focus on the growing need for mental health services.

“Every mayor we spoke with not only shared a personal story, but they also noted a great need in their community for mental health resources and outreach,” McDowell said.

Hale said, “The mayors recognize that our county’s mental health challenges cut across race, gender, ethnic and economic differences, and these issues cannot be addressed by one city alone.”

Recognizing the need, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors provided \$200,000 to help fund the mental health first aid trainings as part of COVID-19 recovery efforts. Funding comes from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, which helps communities overcome challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mental Health First Aid Training will be offered throughout the year and beyond. Schedules will be announced soon.

The San Mateo County Mayors Mental Health Initiative includes Atherton, Belmont, Brisbane, Daly City, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Pacifica, Portola Valley, Redwood City, San Bruno, San Carlos, San Mateo, and South San Francisco.

Throughout May, the County and cities are expected to support proclamations to raise awareness about [Mental Health Month](#). Also look for public buildings alight in green (the national color for mental health) and public events to help raise awareness, highlight resources and spark conversations about mental health.

San Mateo County Health is also sponsoring a series of [events and activities](#).

About Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid is an eight-hour course that teaches volunteers how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The course is delivered by trained instructors who meet certification requirements.

The Growing Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on mental health:

- Mental health conditions are one of the most common health conditions worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a 25 percent increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression.
- In December, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a special advisory to highlight the urgent need to address the nation's youth mental health crisis.
- In March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [announced](#) that in 2021, more than one in three high school students reported they experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, and more than 4 in 10 said they persistently felt sad or hopeless during the past year.

More information on the cities' Mental Health Month proclamations, community trainings, and other events free and open to the public may be found at <https://smcmentalhealthmonth.org/>.

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