



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Bowser Recognizes Local Resources for Youth and Families during National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day

Mental Health Resources for DC youth and Their Caregivers

(WASHINGTON, DC) – Today, the Bowser administration along with the DC Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) recognizes National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day. Each year, National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day (May 7) seeks to raise awareness about the importance of children’s mental health and show that positive mental health is essential to a child’s healthy development.

“Learning healthy social skills how to manage anger and cope with problems during childhood will help children succeed now and later in life,” said DBH Director, Barbara J. Bazron, Ph.D. “Strong, loving parenting skills support mentally healthy families and children.”

Most children and youth cope with daily challenges and stressors with the support of families, friends, and other adults. However, some children who suffer a personal loss or have a traumatic experience may be at greater risk for mental health challenges. DBH offers community-based mental health services for children, youth and their families proven to make a difference in a child’s overall wellness. Through early intervention and treatment, children and youth with emotional and behavioral needs can live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

DBH also operates the Parent Infant Early Childhood Enhancement (PIECE) program and Urgent Care Clinic for children and youth to connect individuals experiencing emotional distress with a mental health clinician. Each program offers a range of mental health resources for DC

youth and their parents or caregivers. Located at **821 Howard Road Southeast in Ward 8**, the facility has a children's clinic with same day, walk in service for children up to six years old, if necessary.

PIECE provides culturally responsive community-based mental health services to infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children (ages 8 and under), that are centered on individual family needs. By intervening early, the program encourages optimal health and wellness for both children and their families.

PIECE Services:

- Assessment/diagnosis
- Individual Psychotherapy
- Family Therapy
- Developmental Screenings
- Crisis Intervention
- Referral, Linkage, and Follow-up
- Infant and Maternal Health Services

Urgent Care Services for children and youth offers same-day appointments to district residents aged 5-25. The goal of this program is to provide short-term stabilization and connections to care for long term mental health services. The Urgent Care clinic implements a family systems approach; psychiatrists for this program work closely with the licensed clinicians from the PIECE program to provide multidisciplinary care, and outpatient medication management for parents and caregivers of children receiving support.

Urgent Care Services:

- Comprehensive Psychiatric evaluations
- Safety Assessments
- Medication Management
- Supportive Therapy
- School Consultations
- Court Evaluations
- Coordination of Care

The PIECE program and Urgent Care services for children and youth work closely with district agency partners such as the Child and Family Services agency, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and District of Columbia Public Charter Schools (DCPCS), and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to connect with families who require resources and mental health guidance. In addition, DBH assists parents and caregivers by providing skills and resources to support healthy families and help their children learn emotional coping behaviors to thrive at home and in schools.

This District prioritizes treatment and supports for youth with substance use as well as mental or emotional disorders, and works with young people, their families and community partners to intervene early and reduce the chances of addiction later in life. A variety of treatment and support services for children, youth and their families are available, including specialized evidence-based practices for youth and families recovering from trauma, emergency care and ongoing treatment primarily through certified, community-based mental health providers.

For more information on local resources for DC children, youth, and family, visit the dbh.dc.gov. To connect with someone at the PIECE program or Urgent Care Services for children and youth, please call (202) 698-1838.

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