



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: John E. Lanza, Director

John.lanza@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon Commissioners Add Funding For Mental Health Services

Hunterdon County's Board of Commissioners, on June 7th, approved an allocation of \$300,000 from federal American Rescue funds to the county's Department of Human Services to expand mental health and other social services, particularly in the schools, in response to concerns that mental health issues have contributed significantly to the recent violence and killings around the nation.

Board of Commissioners Director John E. Lanza stated, "One of the methods for keeping Hunterdon County as one of the safest places to live and to raise children, is to ensure that issues of mental health are being addressed before they become a problem.

Hunterdon Behavioral Health for School Based Services, with County and State financial support, and Hunterdon Medical Center, already provide help in many of the county's schools, but more can be done."

Lanza noted, "There are barriers to mental health services, some of which were identified in the county's most recent needs assessment, including lack of awareness of programs, limited insurance coverage, high co-pays and out of pocket expenses, and staffing shortages, including for Clinicians and Psychiatrists, which lead to Long Waiting Lists.

The additional funding being provided is designed to overcome some of those barriers and expand services to more schools."

Lanza noted that Hunterdon Behavioral Health is providing services in Hampton, Milford, Kingwood Township, Delaware Township, and Califon schools, as well as at Voorhees and North Hunterdon High School and JP Case Middle School.



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Hunterdon Central High School is also served by Hunterdon Behavioral Health, supported directly by the state Department of Children and Families.

Lanza added, “We has also been advised that Rutgers Behavioral Health was recently awarded a grant from the State Division of Mental Health and Addiction services to open and operate an Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) program in Hunterdon County.

EISS, which is due to open in the summer, is a short term, mental health service for adults who are experiencing significant emotional or psychiatric distress and need immediate intervention.

The County’s Director of the Department of Human Services, Meagan O’Reilly, stated, “Our department looks forward to working with our community partners to put these funds to good use. This funding will assist our community in expanding access to mental health services for children and families.”

Lanza concluded, “The County’s Human Services Department has a track record of fairness in the distribution of funds and already has in place an evaluation process by independent committees for recommending the award of grants.

The process ensures fairness and transparency and a true effort to move the dollars to where they can do the most good.”