



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 9, 2023

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **"Not Alone" K-12 Youth and Staff Mental Health Support Efforts**

On March 7, 2023 the Board of Supervisors approved a no-cost-extension of an Arizona Department of Health Services grant to address mental health issues impacting K-12 school populations (Board of Supervisors Regular Agenda Item No. 27).

Attached please find a memorandum from Dr. Theresa Cullen describing one such effort; actively supported with this contract. The "Not Alone" initiative with COPE Community Services, Inc. is a novel social media campaign designed to create greater awareness and decrease stigma around youth mental health issues. It also includes access to brief intervention services for students and school staff who have been impacted by social isolation, uncertainty and stress that may be related to the pandemic. Finally it also provides for training of youth to provide peer-to-peer support.

The Health Department continues its critical work to support health school environments.

JKL/dym

Attachment

c: The Honorable Dustin Williams, Pima County School Superintendent
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Francisco Garcia, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Terry Cullen, Public Health Director, Health Department

Date: March 3, 2023

To: Jan Leshner
County Administrator

From: Theresa Cullen, MD, MS 
Health Department Director

Francisco Garcia
Deputy County Administrator

Re: "Not Alone" K-12 Youth and Staff Mental Health Support Campaign

This information is being provided as an update to the work being done through the Epidemiology Laboratory Capacity (ELC) K-12 Schools Reopening Grant through the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) Youth and School Communities Program. This grant seeks to coordinate efforts to ensure that students and staff of K-12 schools have the tools and resources necessary to minimize the negative effects of COVID-19, which includes addressing the impact the pandemic has had on the mental health of young people and school staff in Pima County.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide remains the third leading cause of death for adolescents and 1 in 3 high school students reported that their mental health was not good. Teachers and staff often experience compassion fatigue, stress, and anxiety. This information highlights the urgency of addressing mental health concerns and the need for increased access to mental health services and resources.

In response, PCHD's Youth and School Communities program, part of the Community Outreach and Prevention Education division, is excited to share the launch of the *Not Alone* campaign, a county-wide mental health awareness and support initiative. PCHD is proud to collaborate with COPE Community Services, Inc., who will be the service agency in the *Not Alone* campaign. The *Not Alone* campaign is designed to provide brief intervention treatment services for K-12 students and school faculty who have tested positive for COVID-19 since May 1, 2021. This collaboration allows participants to receive individual treatment sessions from a mental health team, along with the option to attend skill-building groups. Pima County Health Department is also partnering with the Born This Way Foundation, so youth can become trained to provide peer-to-peer support through the Be There Certificate Program.

The initiative was designed with input and guidance from youth to ensure comprehensive outreach and engagement. The campaign employs a variety of outreach methods, including social media, local news outlets, and targeted advertising. Our team is working closely with school counselors, teachers, and administrators to support them in helping reach as many young people as possible, including, but not limited to, the development of *Not Alone* outreach toolkits consisting of physical and digital assets.

A webpage has been created in partnership with the Health Department's Community Mental Health and Addiction team to direct K-12 youth and staff to appropriate resources and referrals. This page can be viewed at www.pimahelpline.org/notalone.

c: Mr. Dustin Williams, Superintendent of Schools