



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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A resolution commending the Mayor's Behavioral Health and Wellness Advisory Council for providing timely and essential guidance during the COVID pandemic and beyond to prioritize mental health wellbeing and access to services for all residents of Metro Nashville.

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Behavioral Health and Wellness Advisory Council ("BHWAC") launched in 2018 and counts among its priorities identifying, reviewing, and promoting community behavioral health priorities, and determining best practice goals and strategies for lessening the impact of mental illness and addiction on the people of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC membership has included nonprofit, government, university and private sector leaders and organizations dedicated to enhancing the behavioral health wellbeing of all Nashvillians; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID 19 pandemic, which began in March 2020, BHWAC oriented its focus on the community trauma experienced by Nashvillians and the impact on collective mental health; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic introduced unprecedented social effects for which no single or established approach existed; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC addressed a number of Metro-wide priorities that emerged within the first six months of the pandemic and beyond that continue to shape our lives today; and

WHEREAS, Metro-wide priorities during the COVID 19 pandemic included how elementary and secondary education students would be impacted by remote learning; how to reduce police fatalities of individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and improve law enforcement and community relations; how to address escalating fatalities by overdoses caused by opioids; and how to respond to sky-rocketing rates of anxiety and depression, especially in young age cohorts from 18 - 44; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC provided recommendations to Mayor Cooper for COVID 19 Behavioral Health Priorities per his request; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC provided recommendations on co-responder models and training for police on mental health crisis to the Policing Policy Commission per the request of Honorable Judge Melissa Blackburn, who served as co-chair of the Community committee of the Commission.

WHEREAS, the 2020-22 Community Health Improvement Plan ("CHIP") recognizes BHWAC's recommendations in the Issue Area of Access to Affordable Health Care, Objective 2.3, which states: "By December 2022 increase community access to behavioral health care services." By doing so, the CHIP prioritized the need for the county-wide Behavioral Health Needs Assessment; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC issued data-driven and expert stakeholder informed recommendations to Mayor Cooper for use of Opioid Settlement funds per his request; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC held a series of strategy sessions in 2021-22 to ensure that the impact of BHWAC is anchored through two lenses on an ongoing basis:

- Equity: all individuals regardless of social determinants of health have access to behavioral health services.
- Prevention: Develop a system that is prepared to prevent and/or respond to unmet behavioral health needs; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC formed three Ad Hoc committees to focus on Reducing Overdose Deaths, Violence Prevention, and Policy; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC provided recommendations to Mayor Cooper per his request on the role of expanding access to behavioral health in the context of violence prevention; and

WHEREAS, BHWAC created the template for the Behavioral Health Needs Assessment which commenced in 2023. This needs assessment seeks to determine the availability of behavioral health services in Nashville and Davidson County and how all of Nashville's communities are being served; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognize the important work from the BHWAC during the COVID 19 pandemic to prioritize mental health wellbeing and access to care for all residents of Nashville and Davidson County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby commends the Mayor's Behavioral Health and Wellness Advisory Council in its actions and efforts for providing timely and essential guidance during the COVID pandemic and beyond to prioritize mental health wellbeing and access to services for all residents of Metro Nashville.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.