

CaroNova and Partners Set to Announce Development of Statewide Initiative to Address the Youth Mental Health Crisis

Changing Minds: The NC Youth Mental Health Action Plan will bring together stakeholders across North Carolina to support the mental health needs of our youth.

Raleigh, NC — March 10, 2024 — CaroNova and partners have announced the development of a major effort to ensure youth across North Carolina have increased access to the mental health services they need. Changing Minds: The North Carolina Youth Mental Health Action Plan will bring together state leaders, subject matter experts, philanthropic funders, and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan that more effectively delivers youth mental health services. On Monday, March 10, 2025, CaroNova along with partners outlined how this action plan will be developed.

Guided by the belief that all children have mental health needs, just as they do physical health needs, CaroNova believes in valuing and treating mental health as much as we do physical health. This should be done through prevention services that intervene upstream to mitigate the escalation of symptoms in order to address the rising youth mental health crisis. Rates of youth depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation are significantly worse than they were a decade ago. And in North Carolina, access to the right care at the right time is lacking.

- The state [ranks 44th](#) concerning access to youth mental health services.
- In 2021, just [13.7 percent](#) of children aged 3-17 in the state received mental health care, although [39 percent](#) of high school students report feelings of sadness or hopelessness (for middle school students, this number is 32 percent)..
- Nearly half (47.2 percent) of children in North Carolina with a major depressive episode in the last year did not receive mental health services

This crisis demands attention across public and private sectors to develop a focused and actionable strategy for improving youth access to mental health services. Changing Minds: The NC Youth Mental Health Action Plan will facilitate this by working with stakeholders to identify and address gaps and opportunities in youth mental health (ages 5-21) and outlining a series of recommendations. The planning effort was launched in collaboration with state government leaders, healthcare experts, philanthropic organizations, and community partners with initial statewide funding provided by Blue

Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina and Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. The completed action plan will include recommendations on statewide standards of care, proposed policy and practice changes by each representative group, and how to optimize various funding streams (state, federal, philanthropy, and reimbursement).

“We are thrilled to bring together such a distinguished group of legislators, experts, and advocates for this critical conversation,” said Julia Beck, President of CaroNova. “Our goal is to raise awareness, break the stigma surrounding mental health, and empower our youth with the resources and support they need to thrive.”

CaroNova’s goal is to normalize mental wellness for all youth through collaborative cross-sector efforts in schools, health care, and in the community. Changing Minds: The NC Youth Mental Health Action Plan represents a significant step forward in accomplishing this.

-

Members of the media are invited to attend and cover the event. Interviews with speakers and organizers can be arranged upon request; For more information about Changing Minds: The NC Youth Behavioral Health Action Plan, contact: Jai Kumar at jkumar@caronova.org or 919-413-5363.

###

About CaroNova

CaroNova is a health transformation catalyst serving North and South Carolina. Combining strategy and solutions to accelerate the future of an affordable, equitable, and effective system of health for all Carolinians, CaroNova works with partners across the Carolinas to drive reforms. Acting as a connector of people and ideas for the two states, CaroNova addresses common areas of need by supporting promising new practices and developing business models to scale and sustain what works for systemic change. The name CaroNova translates to creating a new vision (Nova) of health for the Carolinas (Caro). Please visit CaroNova.org to learn more.