



News from Livingston County, NY

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Livingston County Mental Health Clinic Provides Critical Services and Demonstrates Adaptability during COVID-19 Crisis

Geneseo, NY, July 9, 2020 — According to recent [data](#), many Americans are reporting significant and sustained increases in symptoms of depression and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Michele Anuskiewicz, Director of Livingston County Mental Health Services, stated, “We anticipate that the impacts of this crisis will have far reaching effects on the psyche of the entire community for years to come.”

Livingston County Mental Health Services has taken swift action to meet the needs of Livingston County residents during this difficult time. Some of the proactive measures immediately put in place are as follows:

- To mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic as much as possible, clinic visits were converted to tele-mental health sessions by mid-March.
- Free and confidential Emotional Support phone lines have been put in place for the community at large and for first responders as well.
- Clinicians use their various areas of expertise to post online art therapy, yoga, distress tolerance, and meditation videos.
- Care Managers have been dropping off needed supplies on client doorsteps.

“As in any crisis, opportunities are there if you look,” said Anuskiewicz about these measures. Specific to the tele-mental health sessions, she states that many clients have responded well to them and appreciate this alternative. “What we have heard loud and clear from folks is that

they like having the option of in-person as well as virtual sessions.” As a response, Livingston County Mental Health Services is now in the process of obtaining permanent tele-mental health approval from the state.

The Cuomo administration recently stated that, because of growing budget deficits and the absence of a federal relief package in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, they would have to cut state aid to localities by one-fifth this summer. These cuts will have a direct impact on many county-run programs and services.

Anuszkiewicz commented, “Livingston County Mental Health Services remains committed to providing top-notch behavioral health services to our community members. However, a 20% cut to our state aid will definitely take a toll. We can only stretch the already overburdened system so far.”

Livingston County Administrator Ian M. Coyle stated, “As we continue to respond to the effects of COVID-19 on our residents’ behavioral health, the work of Livingston County Mental Health Services has never been more important. A 20% state aid cut to mental health services – which is absolutely inexplicable in this time of major, sustained demand for these services – is simply not appropriate and we are calling on the state government to hold off on these cuts as we get through this pandemic together in concert with our state government partners. The continuation of this essential state funding will allow us in Livingston County to offer vital behavioral health services to our residents during a time when they need these services the most.”

For more information on Livingston County Mental Health Services, please call 585-243-7250 or visit <https://www.livingstoncounty.us/152/Mental-Health-Community-Services>.

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