



## WHAT IS EXPANDED SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH?

**Expanded School Mental Health (ESMH)** is a comprehensive system of school mental health supports delivered collaboratively by school staff and strategic community partners. ESMH builds upon core programs to ensure a full continuum of services that support all students, including prevention, early intervention and treatment. The ESMH model includes shared school/community funding; meaningful involvement of parents and youth; use of evidence-based practices and programs; and continuous quality improvement. See the WV [ESMH One-pager](#) to learn more.

### THE NEED

Much data exists to validate the undeniable need for ESMH. Below are a few key factors.

- West Virginia ranks highest in the nation for the prevalence of poor mental health and resulting activity limitations.<sup>1</sup>
- About **one-half** of all students will experience a diagnosable mental health, behavioral or substance abuse problem by age 18.<sup>3, 9</sup>
- Up to 79% of school-age youth have unmet mental health needs.<sup>3, 9</sup>
- Untreated youth mental health challenges continue to have effects into adulthood.<sup>2</sup>
- 23.8% of West Virginia adults are diagnosed with depression, ranking 2nd highest in the nation.<sup>1</sup>
- WV has one of the highest adolescent suicide rates in the nation with suicide being the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for adolescents.<sup>5</sup>
- West Virginia has the highest percentage of institutionalized /incarcerated youth populations in the nation.<sup>4</sup>
  - Prevention /early intervention efforts can decrease these numbers.<sup>8</sup>
  - 50-75% of incarcerated youth have diagnosable mental health conditions.<sup>3</sup>
- Mental health conditions are the costliest childhood conditions.<sup>4</sup>
  - It cost an average of \$141,467 per year to incarcerate one youth in a WV.<sup>4</sup>
- The WV Governor's Advisory Council on Substance Abuse Report 2016 recommends strengthening prevention and early intervention efforts in school-based services for youth, including ESMH.<sup>10</sup>

### THE BENEFITS

Providing comprehensive mental health in schools has many benefits, including

- Improved access to care<sup>3</sup>
- Greater opportunities for follow through and collaboration to support student success<sup>3</sup>
- Opportunities for universal mental health screening and early identification<sup>3</sup>
- Reduction of stigma, when it is part of the normal school experience<sup>3</sup>
- When schools promote caring relationships, build protective factors; foster development of assets and help children learn wellness-promoting behaviors, it increases the odds of children thrive when faced with adversity.<sup>2</sup>
- Improved student outcomes, including academic achievement, attendance, behaviors, high school completion rates, and college and career readiness.<sup>6</sup>
- Has the potential to "improve population-wide health outcomes of the next generation"<sup>7</sup>
- Half of all adult mental health disorders start by age 14, making schools the best source for early identification and intervention.<sup>3</sup>
- Mental Health promotion and prevention programs are cost effective. *Multiple studies show it is much cheap to prevent and intervene than to treat and incarcerate.*<sup>5</sup>
- The current estimated "value of saving a 14-year-old high risk juvenile from a life of crime to range from \$2.6 to \$5.3 million."<sup>4</sup>



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