

# CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

February 2022



## Message from the Director

Dear DMH family,

The Black History Month celebrations that took place across DMH service areas and our all-staff town hall earlier this month that highlighted the progress of DMH ARDI (Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion) Division were opportunities for us to recognize the valuable contributions of Black historical figures, heroes and individuals to the fabric of American culture and society. The reality, however, is that there remains more work to be done to break down systemic barriers to care and ensure equitable and culturally-competent services for all L.A. County residents and communities.

As the latest surge in this pandemic begins to wane and we look forward to connecting in person more often at gatherings, events and day-to-day activities, our entire DMH workforce forges onward to continue to engage with and provide the best care for the most vulnerable and underserved among us. From our DMH front line staff on the streets and clinics to our administrative employees, I am so proud of the entire DMH family's dedication to our mission.

One group I want to spotlight in anticipation of Social Work Month in March are all of our DMH Social Workers and the contributions they make in service to the individuals, families, and communities they interact with on a daily basis. The Social Work Month 2022 theme "The Time is Right for Social Work" harkens the words and sentiments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who reminded us that "the time is always right to do what is right." As we celebrate our DMH Social Work professionals, I hope we are able to reflect on the "right" that we ourselves can contribute to the positive change and assistance to those around us, much as social workers have consistently done throughout [their profession](#).

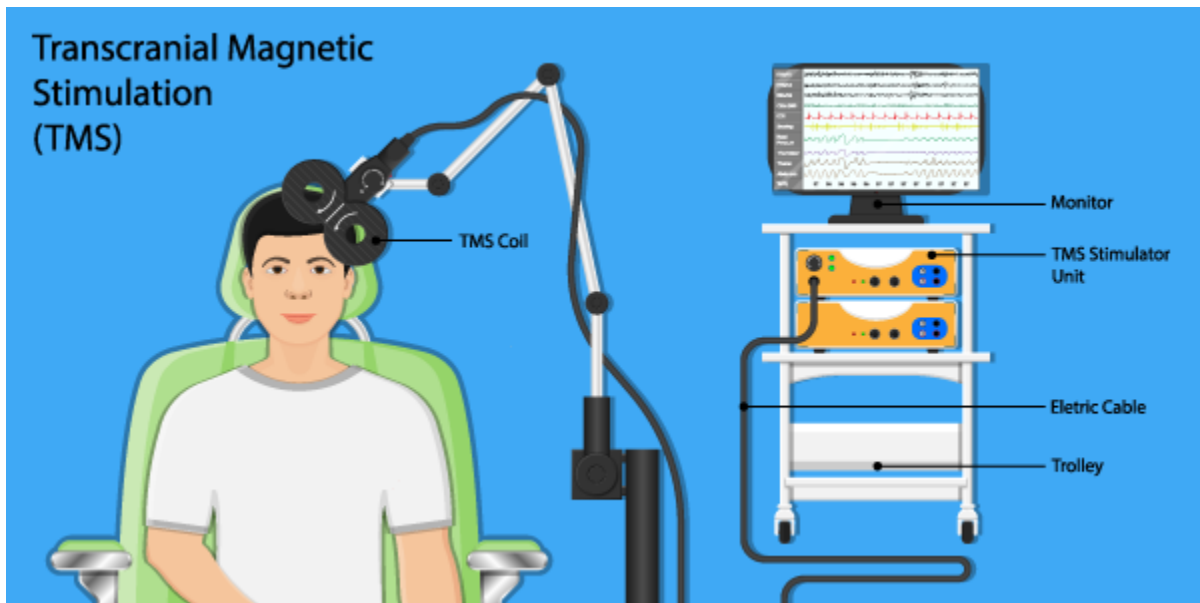
While our collective recovery feels closer at hand, many of us are still suffering mentally and emotionally. With this in mind, I encourage everyone to stay connected, engage in healthy, purposeful activities, be

supportive of each other, and if needed, reach out to neighbors, friends and resources available to you from the Department of Mental Health. In addition to our [24/7 hotline](#), we continue to offer free for all L.A. residents the [Headspace](#) meditation application and the [iPrevail](#) digital mental health application, both accessible on the [DMH website](#). Please share or take advantage of these resources.

Heart forward,

Jon

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.  
Director



## Innovation Project Highlight: Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation

Thanks to support from California's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), LACDMH has been able to provide transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to treat clients experiencing depression symptoms and are resistant to first-line treatment, such as medication and psychotherapy. While TMS was approved by the Food and Drug

Administration to treat depression in 2008, it has only been primarily available in private healthcare systems, and LACDMH is one of the first public mental health systems to offer this safe and highly effective treatment for our clients.

With TMS, a magnetic coil is placed on the surface of the client's head and it is then activated to generate a magnetic field to stimulate specific areas of the brain, providing immediate relief from symptoms as well as long-term relief with repeated applications (a typical course of treatment is five TMS sessions a week over four to six weeks.)

"TMS is very effective for treating depression, and is being studied at other organizations for other behavioral conditions such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and suicidal crises," said LACDMH Associate Medical Director Marc Heiser, M.D., Ph.D. "We are excited to be able to offer TMS for clients who have not responded as well to first-line interventions for depression."

[Learn more about TMS.](#)



## LACDMH and Partners Cuts Ribbon for Antelope Valley Community Family Resource Center

Antelope Valley residents welcomed the grand opening of the Antelope Valley Community Family Resource Center (AV CFRC) during a ribbon cutting ceremony in early February. The first of its kind in the area, the Lancaster center will serve as a regional hub for residents to access services provided by government agencies and community nonprofits. The center's programming will include community outreach and prevention-oriented activities that will empower community voice and leadership, while mitigating risk factors and increasing engagement, access, and wellbeing. The AV CFRC is located at 44226 10th Street West, Lancaster, CA 93534, and is open Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[More on AV CFRC.](#)



Our ongoing efforts to promote mental health awareness and assist the most vulnerable among us continue to receive positive attention in the media. In case you missed it, check out some highlights of the excellent stories and representation by our experts:

- Dr. Sherin and mental health clinical manager Kanchana Tate participated in L.A. County Youth Commission’s Feb. 10 virtual panel on “[Centering Youth Voice in Mental Health](#),” where they talked to Youth Commissioners about the mental health needs of L.A. County’s youth and highlighted resources available to support their wellbeing.
- LACDMH’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Curley Bonds was featured on a [KABC-TV](#) interview about youth mental health and advised parents on signs of distress to watch out for.
- Dr. Bonds was also interviewed on [Spectrum News](#) about the ongoing need for housing, mental health, and social services to help people experiencing homelessness in the Venice area and highlighted a new pilot program that gives 911 dispatchers the option to send an unarmed crisis team instead of police for non-violent calls.
- [Antelope Valley Press](#) and KABC-TV covered the ribbon-cutting event at the newly-opened Antelope Valley Community Family Resource Center.



## Cultural Traditions and Connections: Lunar New Year's Traditions

*The following article is from [Cultural Traditions and Connections](#), a space featuring voices from LACDMH's diverse communities.*

When people talk about the “holiday season” in the U.S., they typically refer to that period between Thanksgiving dinner and New Year’s Day. But shortly after that, another massive holiday brings friends and family together in several Asian countries, with concurrent parties that carry on the traditions stateside. The Lunar New Year, most commonly associated with the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, typically falls between mid-January and mid-February annually. Lunar New Year 2022 is on February 1, and in terms of the Chinese zodiac animal, it’s the Year of the Tiger.

It’s called the Lunar New Year because it marks the first new moon of the lunisolar calendars traditional to many east Asian countries including China, South Korea, and Vietnam, which are regulated by the cycles of the moon and sun. As the New York Times explains, “a solar year—the time it takes Earth to orbit the sun—lasts around 365 days, while a lunar year, or 12 full cycles of the Moon, is roughly 354 days.” As with the Jewish lunisolar calendar, “a month is still defined by the moon, but an extra month is added periodically to stay close to the solar year.” This is why the new year falls on a different day within that month-long window each year.

[Read more about Lunar New Year's traditions.](#)

Let's get social @LACDMH!



Thank you for taking the time to read and engage with this issue of “**Connecting Our Community**,” a monthly newsletter focused on the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health’s updates and priorities. Visit [dmh.lacounty.gov](https://dmh.lacounty.gov) for more resources.

We welcome your comments, story ideas, and recommendations at [pio@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:pio@dmh.lacounty.gov). You may adjust your subscriptions settings at this [link](#).

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