

**CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY**  
April 2022



## Message from the Director

Dear DMH family,

As we move forward with our collective recovery from this pandemic, this year's Mental Health Awareness Month ought to be as much a celebration of how far we have come as an opportunity to raise awareness, reduce stigma and provide advocacy for mental health issues. This year's theme — "[Together for Mental Health](#)" — truly embodies our ability to emotionally, physically, and philosophically come together to take care of our personal wellbeing as well as those of our neighbors and communities.

LACDMH will be hosting a variety of [events and activities](#) celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month and I encourage you to attend our in-person or virtual events next month to share your experiences, connect with others, and learn about our department's services and resources to support your journey to healing and community. I am also pleased to announce the return of [WE RISE](#) beginning next week. Guided by the theme "By Us, For Us", this fifth annual event will feature community-driven programming throughout May to promote healing, connection, and social action. Check out WE RISE 2022's website to explore and participate in the creative, cultural, and community engagement experiences taking place across the County and online to support your personal and our collective wellbeing.

I hope to attend as many community events as possible in the next month and look forward to the chance to see you and connect in person.

Heart forward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jon'.

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



## Join Us for WE RISE 2022 Throughout May

LACDMH is proud to be a part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual WE RISE, a series of community-led events that support health and healing across Los Angeles County. From art installations to cultural experiences, WE RISE events are a chance to connect with each other, access helpful resources, and strengthen our community wellbeing. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and, as the ripple effects of the pandemic, social injustice and global pressures continue, now is the time to come together.

Because youth mental health has been disproportionately impacted these last several years, WE RISE 2022 is centering young people's needs and experiences in this year's initiative, though events are open to all L.A. County community members.

This year's WE RISE programming includes:

- The monthlong [“Culture Cures”](#) program featuring activities to support healing, creativity, resilience, and connectedness.
- The [South Central Film Festival](#) will screen films to amplify the voices of BIPOC, LGBTQIA2-S+, immigrant, and differently-abled communities
- [“Community Healing Open Mic”](#) that promotes creative expression for all emotions to be seen, heard, validated, and felt
- A [“Soil to Stomach”](#) food growing, foraging, and preparing workshop to encourage healthy eating

- The “[Here to Queer](#)” Community Fair with live music, free food, and wellbeing resources, led by and geared for queer youth and their families

For more WE RISE 2022 information and updates, visit [werise.la](#) and connect with them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).



## **LACDMH and Partners Expand Access to Neurofeedback Therapy for Youth and Families**

To support the wellbeing of systems-involved youth and families, LACDMH providers have joined a pilot project to begin offering neurofeedback therapy to help treat behavioral disorders. While this therapy has been readily available in private mental health care settings, this pilot – which trains clinicians and provides equipment to implement this therapy – aims to expand this treatment’s availability to clients who are on public insurance (MediCal) as well as those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Neurofeedback, also known as neurotherapy, involves connecting a client to non-invasive sensors that detect brain activity and to a device that gives real-time feedback – typically in the form of visual, tactile, and/or auditory cues – to guide and reinforce healthy brain function. With repeated applications – a typical course of treatment is two one-hour sessions a week for 10 weeks – this helps the client self-regulate their brain activity and can provide long-term relief for a broad range of mental health symptoms – including those linked with depression,

anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and insomnia – and can enhance the effectiveness of other mental health treatments, such as psychotherapy and medication.

[Read more about this pilot program.](#)



## Watch Our Mental Health Promoters in Action

LACDMH's United Mental Health Promoters program was highlighted by L.A. County Channel 36 for its contribution to "Building a Healthier L.A. County." In the video, mental health promoter Xiomara Lopez highlights the program's field-based outreach services for the County's diverse communities, educating residents about mental health issues and connecting them to services offered by our department and partner organizations. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about their work and check out the program's [webpage](#) to request promoter services in your community.



# LACDMH in the NEWS



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 was featured on a [KPCC-FM's "Air Talk"](#) to talk about Governor Newsom's proposed "CARE Court" legislation to provide community-based mental health and substance use disorder services to Californians who are unable to care for themselves due to these challenges.
- [Los Angeles Times](#) published a story about the people experiencing homelessness' impact on public transit and mentioned a recently passed [Board motion](#) to explore a LACDMH & Metro partnership to provide mental health crisis response on buses, rail cars, and transit stations.
- [MLB.com](#) mentioned LACDMH's upcoming collaboration with the Dodgers for a [Mental Health Awareness Day promotion](#) during their May 15 game with the Phillies.



## Cultural Traditions and Connections

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

**“LACDMH’s Speakers Bureau Celebrates Its Second Anniversary”**  
By Sandra T. Chang, Ph.D., ARDI Division-Cultural Competency Unit

April is “Celebrate Diversity Month”. Some of us would call this “destiny”, some “coincidence”, others “pure luck”... regardless, it happened as if intentionally planned: the [LACDMH Speakers Bureau](#) celebrates its anniversary of implementation in the month of April. A special anniversary celebration was hosted on April 7<sup>th</sup> by Dr. Jorge Partida Del Toro and Dr. Sandra Chang, Speakers Bureau co-directors, to recognize the membership and honor all Speaker Bureau accomplishments over its two years of operation. Members received awards of recognition for their sustained and selfless commitment to serving our underserved communities. In-person and virtual event participants had the opportunity to hear from two dynamic panels featuring Speakers Bureau members sharing their experiences as media experts representing our Department and the internal support that expert members of the Chinese culture created within the Speakers Bureau.

Many are the accomplishments of the Speaker Bureau, which operates under LACDMH’s Antiracism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Division. Over the last two years, multiple Los Angeles County Board Offices, K-12 schools and institutions of higher learning, community and faith-based organizations, professional associations, and other governmental

agencies across all eight Service Areas, the State, and the country have benefited from the expertise of the Speakers Bureau. Members of the Speakers Bureau engage in a variety of internal and public-facing speaking engagements that address the clinical, cultural, and linguistic mental health needs of L.A. County communities where they live and serve.

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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](http://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](#).