

**CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY**  
April 2024



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH  
hope. recovery. wellbeing.



## **LACDMH's Take Action Kick-off Begins Mental Health Awareness Month Celebrations**

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) officially kicked-off its [2024 Take Action campaign](#) at St. Anne's Conference and Event Center near Downtown Los Angeles on April 4. The 2024 Take Action L.A. County campaign during the month of May, which is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month, features 70 local, community-based organizations that will host more than 180 grant-funded events made possible through assistance from the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

The kick-off featured leadership from LACDMH, including Director Dr. Lisa H. Wong; Theion Perkins, R.N., B.S.N., M.S.N., Sr. Deputy Director of Outpatient Care Services Division; leadership from the Department's Service Areas; and CalMHSA. Information was shared about the Department's nine events, including one in each Service Area

and a closing Countywide Take Action L.A. County event on Saturday, June 1 at the Santa Monica Pier.

This year's community events include free yoga and meditation, art and music, block parties, a 5K run/walk, the Healing Bus, and more. All events will focus on decreasing stigma and discrimination, increasing help-seeking behaviors, and awareness of and access to mental health services and resources. For a complete list of all Take Action L.A. County events, visit [TakeActionLA.com/events](https://www.takeactionla.com/events).



## **LACDMH Hosts Grand Opening for Antelope Valley Child & Adolescent Program**

Nearly 50 people crowded into the Palmdale office of the Antelope Valley Child and Adolescent Program on April 1 to celebrate the grand opening of the County's newest mental health clinic. The event, which premiered the County's first children's mental health program in the Antelope Valley, included a tour of the facilities and remarks from Theion Perkins, R.N., B.S.N., M.S.N., Sr. Deputy Director for Outpatient

Care Services; Anders Corey, Health Deputy for Fifth District County Supervisor Kathryn Barger; James Coomes, L.C.S.W., Chief of Service Area 1; and Dr. Makesha Jones-Chambers, Mental Health Program Manager II.

Due to the rapid growth of the region's population, there has been an increasing need for mental health services for individuals from birth to age 21. This new program will provide them and their families with client-centered and trauma-informed mental health services. The program offers individual, group, and family therapy; crisis evaluation and intervention; case management and community linkage; medication evaluation and support; and psychological testing.

The Child and Adolescent program includes 30 trained mental health providers, including marriage and family therapists, clinical social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists. The program also has medical case workers and community health workers for additional support, community outreach, and service linkage.





## Clippers Host Mental Health Awareness Night with LACDMH

The Los Angeles Clippers and LACDMH celebrated Mental Health Awareness Night on April 10 at the Crypto.com Arena in Downtown Los Angeles. To recognize the importance of mental health, the Clippers passed out stress balls in the shape of a basketball and featured LACDMH branding and information throughout the arena. LACDMH branding was also featured on the Peacock Place screens in L.A. Live, overlooking departmental staff who passed out swag to patrons outside the arena.

Although the Clippers ultimately fell to a late flurry of points by the Phoenix Suns, the LACDMH team still enjoyed spreading the importance of mental health and well-being with other Clippers fans. The partnership with the Clippers has allowed LACDMH to reach new audiences in 2024, including meeting with students at the Inner City Education Foundation (ICEF) Middle Academy Charter School in February and teenagers and young adults from the Brotherhood Crusade Youth Source Center in March.



## Discussing Intergenerational Trauma Resulting from the Armenian Genocide

On Saturday, April 13, LACDMH partnered with the Armenian community to host a significant event addressing intergenerational trauma stemming from the 1915 genocide, which tragically ended the lives of 1.5 million Armenians. The gathering included notable therapists, dignitaries, and community figures who shared strategies for coping and healing for future generations affected by historical violence against Armenians and Armenia.

Mariam Nahapetyan, LACDMH Mental Health Service Coordinator II, gracefully facilitated the day's proceedings. The event kicked off with a keynote address by Talin Khechoomian, L.C.S.W., who has experience working with soldiers in Armenia after the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. Ms. Khechoomian provided insights into assisting traumatized soldiers and their families, who may find it difficult to discuss their traumatic experiences.

The event also featured speeches from California Senator Anthony Portantino and Jorge Partida Del Toro, Psy.D., from LACDMH, who contextualized the genocide amid contemporary global violence.

[Keep reading about the event.](#)



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 subject matter experts:

- Dr. Wong was quoted in a [New York Times](#) story about California's implementation of CARE Court. The story also featured a photo of the Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement (HOME) team at work.
- The opening of our Antelope Valley Child and Adolescent Program was covered by multiple outlets, including [KABC-TV](#), [KNX News](#), [Antelope Valley Press](#), and [Hey SoCal](#).
- Connie Draxler, Acting Chief Deputy Director, and Kalene Gilbert, Program Manager of Mental Health Services Act Programs, were quoted in a [LAist story](#) about the potential impact of California's Proposition 1.
- [Pasadena Now](#) covered the LACDMH-funded United Mental Health Promoter project to provide education, outreach, and linkage services to individuals experiencing homelessness in Pasadena.
- Mental Health Training Coordinator Jae Kim was quoted in a [Mental Health First Aid](#) (MHFA) article about making mental health resources more inclusive and accessible to diverse communities, where he talked about the translation and cultural adaptation of MHFA materials for Korean-speaking audiences.

Let's get social @LACDMH!



Thank you for taking the time to read and engage with this issue of **“Connecting Our Community,”** a bi-monthly online publication focused on the latest information and news from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Visit [dmh.lacounty.gov](http://dmh.lacounty.gov) for more resources.

We welcome your comments, story ideas, and recommendations at  
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