

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY
April 2025



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



LACDMH Hosts Take Action for Mental Health L.A. County Kickoff

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) officially kicked off its annual May is Mental Health Awareness Month [Take Action for Mental Health L.A. County](#) campaign on March 24. The event, which took place at St. Anne's Conference Center, featured many of the Department's community partners and remarks from Department Director Dr. Lisa H. Wong, other LACDMH leadership, and the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

The 2025 Take Action campaign is supported by CalMHSA and involves 68 local organizations that were granted more than \$4.15 million to host mental health-related events throughout May. The Department and CalMHSA target all the events to support community mental wellness through activities like free yoga and meditation to art, music and community resources. Additionally, LACDMH is collaborating with high-profile, social impact partners, including the Los Angeles Lakers, Los Angeles Sparks, Los Angeles Football Club and media partners Univision and Meruelo Media who will assist in promoting the

events and the Take Action message.

This year's Take Action campaign features nine large-scale events hosted by the Department across the County and will take place at several local college campuses, including Antelope Valley College, Santa Monica City College, Pasadena City College and more. A final countywide celebration will occur on Saturday, May 31 at Gloria Molina Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles. LACDMH also has billboards and transit advertising throughout Los Angeles to encourage people to Take Action for their mental health. For a complete list of events and to learn more about the campaign, visit TakeActionLA.com.



Celebrating 10 Years of Compassionate Care: AOT's Decade of Service

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program, also known as Laura's Law. Enacted after the tragic death of Laura Wilcox in 2001, AOT was created to support individuals living with severe mental illness who are at significant risk of decline or detention due to poor treatment adherence.

AOT focuses on engaging those with repeated hospitalizations, incarcerations, or a history of harm to self or others. The program starts with intensive outreach, encouraging voluntary treatment. If efforts are

unsuccessful, AOT may petition for court-ordered treatment to ensure safety and stability. Ultimately, the goal is to reduce hospitalizations and law enforcement encounters by connecting individuals to long-term support through Full-Service Partnership (FSP) or Enriched Residential Services (ERS).

Over the past decade, AOT has bridged the gap between the mental health system and those most in need. By fostering collaboration between the courts, County Counsel, Public Defender's Office, Patients' Rights advocates, law enforcement, and mental health providers, AOT offers a more coordinated and compassionate path to recovery.

[Continue reading about AOT's efforts.](#)



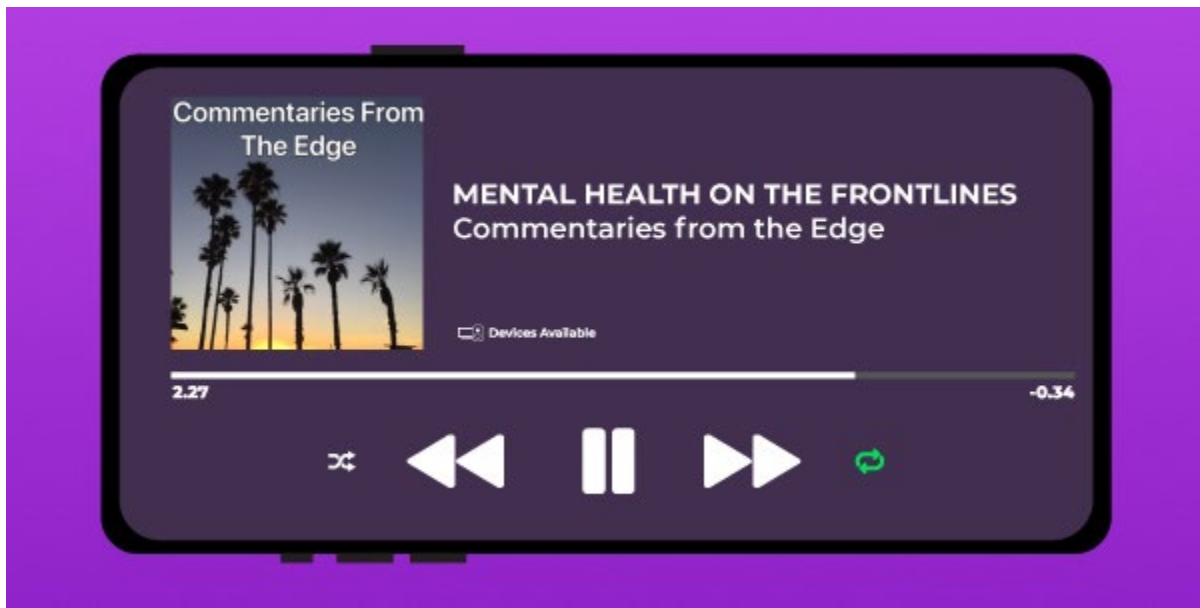
Alternative Crisis Response Launches New Awareness Campaign

LACDMH's Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) program launched an awareness campaign this month to make County residents aware of the Department's non-law enforcement mental health crisis support teams. The campaign features members of the program's Field Intervention Teams (FIT) to foster trust in the County's first responders for mental health crisis support.

[IDEO](#), an international design and innovation firm, designed the campaign that features a [revamped webpage](#), public awareness videos available on YouTube, billboards, posters, and social media assets, highlighting FIT members who apply their skills and experience with mental health in helping individuals and families during a crisis.

The Department's ACR team is a unique operation of field workers who are dispatched through the department's 24/7 Help Line and 988. When appropriate, FIT members are called to a scene in pairs with one mental health clinician and one community health worker in plain clothes. Once on-site, the team engages with family members or loved ones to stabilize and de-escalate the situation.

[Read more about ACR's updates.](#)



Mental Health on the Frontlines Podcast Wraps with Episode 13-16

Episode #13: Good news from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD): A partnership, decades in the making is changing how mental health crises are handled. Bac Luu, a Mental Health Clinical Program Manager I with DMH, shares insights on how embedding mental health professionals within the LAPD is improving outcomes for both law enforcement and the community.

Since 1993, programs like the Systemwide Mental Health Assessment Response Teams (SMART) and Case Assessment Management Program (CAMP) have paired police officers with mental health professionals to respond to crises. Over the years, this collaboration has expanded, earning national and international recognition. Luu continues the work pioneered by Chuck Lennon, proving that teamwork between policing and mental health services benefits everyone.

Episode #14: LACDMH's "Who Do I Call for Help?" campaign highlights the importance of 988 — a 24/7 national crisis number providing immediate support. Reuben Wilson, head of the Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) Unit, explains how this initiative diverts mental health emergencies from law enforcement to trained professionals.

[Read more about the remaining episodes.](#)

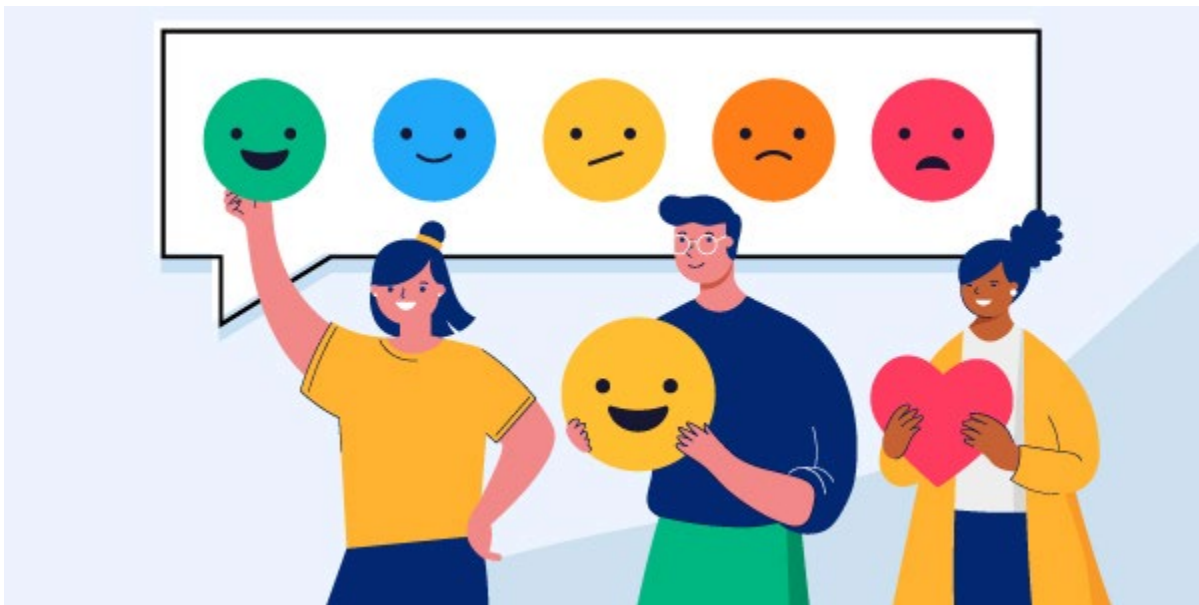


Our ongoing efforts to promote mental health awareness and assist the most vulnerable among us continue to receive positive attention in the media. In case you missed it, check out some highlights of the excellent stories and representation by our subject matter experts:

- [LAist](#), [Fox LA](#), [The Malibu Times](#), and [CalOES News](#) highlighted the ongoing need to restore and maintain wellbeing during

recovery from this year's wildfires featured LACDMH as a mental health resource for those impacted by the disaster.

- Service Area 2 chief Antonio Banuelos was interviewed by [NBC Los Angeles](#) about the mental health impact of living with silicosis, a chronic respiratory illness caused by inhaling silica dust.
- [Los Angeles Times](#) and [LAist](#) covered the proposed L.A. County budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The budget, which is pending approval from the County Board of Supervisors, includes adding more Field Intervention Teams to respond to mental health crises, utilizing Measure A funding to provide services to those experiencing homelessness, and exempting LACDMH from the 3% spending cut imposed on most County agencies.
- Associate Medical Director Dr. Shayan Rab was interviewed by the [California Sun podcast](#) about our department's Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement teams and how they can be an innovative model to support people experiencing homelessness and serious mental illness in and beyond L.A. County.
- [SCV News](#) and [My News LA](#) ran stories about LACDMH's Alternative Crisis Response awareness campaign, which highlights our Field Intervention Teams as first responders to help County residents experiencing mental health crises.



We Want to Hear From You!

We hope you will participate in the annual Consumer Perception Survey that will take place from **May 9 – 23, 2025**. Consumers who have visited an office during a designated point-in-time will be sent a link to the survey and will have the opportunity to share their thoughts on outpatient LACDMH services. We look forward to your feedback!

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 for more resources.

We welcome your comments, story ideas, and recommendations at pio@dmh.lacounty.gov.