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Mental Health Emphasis Key Part of Proposed Anschutz Medical Campus Strategy

The most underserved, un-met need in healthcare today, says Chancellor

Aurora, Colo. -- At his Nov. 1 State of the Campus address, Chancellor Don Elliman laid out preliminary ideas on a plan for the future of University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. One of his nine proposed strategic elements is to significantly increase the University's work in mental health.

"Go big in mental health," said Elliman. "Mental health is unquestionably the biggest un-met and/or underserved need in American healthcare today. In the past few years, we have expanded our footprint in this arena and we have several more initiatives on the horizon that should significantly increase it beyond what we now have."

Elliman noted the Anschutz Medical Campus has expanded its footprint in mental health with the founding of the National Behavioral Innovation Center (NBHIC) in the past year, as well as expansion of the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center, the funding of the Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center, and the University's participation in the Colorado State Innovation Model grant. He envisions an even greater mental health effort with stronger coordination.

"To date, these efforts have been largely independent of one another," Elliman said. "We need to bring them together into a common strategy and we need to match our clinical expansion with renewed emphasis on research and education as well. Funding is always a major barrier here but there is a growing interest and momentum in tackling mental health issues and we can build on that."

In its first nine months of operations, the NBHIC has established itself as an emerging leader and resource that pursues creative, scalable behavioral health care solutions.

"The 'Innovation' in our center's name means rapid development, implementation and evaluation of best-practices for addressing mental health," said Matt Vogl, executive director, NBHIC.

NBHIC has a dozen promising projects underway aimed at a variety of in-need populations. The Center partners in these projects include a range of community leaders and groups, as well as colleagues on the Anschutz Medical Campus and other University of Colorado campuses.

"All of our community project partners are struggling to find solutions to urgent behavioral health issues and are eager for new approaches," said Vogl. "We applaud Chancellor Elliman's proposal to focus the strengths of the Anschutz Medical Campus community for greater impact in solving the mental health challenges our state and nation face, and we look forward to engaging in this growing effort."

ABOUT THE NATIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INNOVATION CENTER

The National Behavioral Health Innovation Center was established in 2016 with a mission to find, develop and put in to practice big new ideas to prevent, treat and change the way people think about mental illness. As part of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, NBHIC has a unique role in connecting academic research, patient treatment and industry innovation to accelerate mental health solutions that have significant impact for patients and entire communities.

www.behavioralhealthinnovation.org