



DUPAGE COUNTY

NEWS RELEASE

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DuPage County Announces New Council for Mental Health, Substance Use Care

Wheaton – The DuPage County Board and DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) are pleased to announce the new DuPage Council on Strengthening the System for Mental Health and Substance Use Care (DCSS). This Council is an ambitious transformation of the HOPE Taskforce designed to further integrate countywide efforts to improve mental health and reduce substance use disorders.

“As I envisioned an organization that would help to expand access to quality mental health services in DuPage County, it made sense to also include our efforts to reduce substance use disorder in our community. We know that very often, these two struggles are linked. I believe this Council will provide expertise and desperately needed resources for those seeking behavioral health care, those fighting addiction and their families, who so often feel powerless and don’t know where to turn,” said DuPage County Board Chair Deborah Conroy.

The Council is a joint operation of the DuPage County Board and DCHD. The Council will consist of members who specialize in mental health and substance use disorder treatment, recovery, criminal justice, public health, prevention, and education. This Council will include local, and state elected officials as well as community stakeholders and people with lived experience.

DuPage County Board Chair, Deborah Conroy, and DCHD Executive Director, Adam Forker, will serve as co-chairs of the Council.

The following individuals shall be serving on the Council:

- State Senator Karina Villa
- State Representative Terra Costa Howard
- County Board Member Paula Deacon Garcia
- County Board Member Greg Schwarze
- County Board Member Cindy Cronin Cahill
- County Board Member Sam Tornatore
- DuPage County State’s Attorney Robert Berlin
- DuPage County Coroner Dr. Richard Jorgensen

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- Judge Paul A. Marchese
- DuPage County Public Defender Jeff York
- Fire Chief Keith Krestan
- Chief of Police Roy Newton
- Dr. Daniel Sullivan
- Felicia Miceli
- Jarret Burton
- Jeff Geiger
- Sheryl Bates
- Cara Siebert
- Jennifer Hess
- Dr. Natasha Dolgin
- Geri Kerger
- Karyn Charvat

The Council will be supported by an initial annual investment of \$250,000 from the DuPage County Board. Funds will support innovative grassroots projects, encourage transformational changes that improve access to care, and seek to educate communities about behavioral health prevalence, risk factors, and symptoms. The goal of the Council is to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorder and to encourage those impacted to seek treatment. The Council will support families, caregivers, and community members who are also affected.

“The Council will implement strategies to enhance awareness of and access to services for residents impacted by mental health and substance use disorders,” said Adam Forker, Executive Director, DuPage County Health Department.

The Council meetings will occur every other month, in person, at the Linda A. Kurzawa Community Center at 115 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, IL.

Interested members of the community are invited to attend the Council meetings, which will be open and announced on the DuPage County Board and DCHD websites.

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