PRESS RELEASES

20 MARCH 2025

Chicago Public Schools Announces New Partnership to Offer Virtual Mental Health Care Services to 110,000 Students Throughout the District

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CHICAGO - Students across Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will soon have access to virtual healthcare services as part of efforts to address mental health needs among youth. Starting in mid-March, approximately 110,000 high school students throughout the District will have access to high-quality, clinically-validated mental health services through Hazel Health - the nation's largest school-centered provider of telehealth services – supported

"Even before COVID-19, our students faced unique mental health challenges, and the need has only grown over the past several years. This new partnership with Hazel Health, combined with the support of UnitedHealthcare, highlights our District's dedication to prioritizing the mental, social, and emotional health of both students and staff," said CPS CEO Pedro Martinez. "As a public education system, our mission is to help students succeed and that includes both academic aspirations and empowering our children to navigate life's daily challenges with the support they need to thrive."

Students in Chicago are experiencing an unprecedented mental health crisis. Consistent with national trends, data from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey shows that 43 percent of Chicago high school students reported persistent sadness – a 42 percent increase in just 10 years. CPS' five-year strategic plan includes connectedness and well-being as key priorities, laying out strategies to approach student learning by considering the whole child's physical health, mental health, safety, social and emotional needs, and academic achievement.

This new partnership is supported through an investment from UnitedHealthcare as part of a broader effort announced last year to provide virtual school-centered health care for up to 1 million students across select states nationwide. Additional districts throughout Illinois will be announced soon.

"UnitedHealthcare is committed to improving the well-being of our community by providing students with the essential mental health support they need through collaborations like this one with Hazel Health," said Dan Parietti, CEO, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Illinois. "By leveraging innovative technology, we aim to create a supportive environment where every student can thrive both academically and emotionally."

"We firmly believe that the challenges our communities are facing today should not get in the way of students having access to the support and quality services they deserve," said Josh Golomb, CEO, Hazel Health. "Through our partnership with Chicago Public Schools, not only are we providing students with mental health services, we're helping them navigate daily struggles and empowering them to make meaningful, lasting improvements in their overall health and wellbeing."

significant reductions in depression and anxiety after an average of six sessions. Additionally, early research also indicates that Hazel's therapy program can combat chronic absenteeism. One emerging data point: 68% of students who engaged with Hazel's therapy program improved their attendance – and over 30% had zero absences — since their referral to Hazel. To learn more, please visit hazel.co.

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