

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

March 17, 2020

**Mental Health Providers Strive to Increase Funding as Communities Deal with COVID-19**

Providers request emergency Medicaid funding distribution to aid in the current pandemic

Madison - NAMI Dane County, Anesis Therapy Center and Chrysalis are requesting increased funding to maintain and increase mental health and recovery-focused telehealth services, including therapy, peer support and supported employment services, to community members who are struggling during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

“Many folks will not seek out in-person services due to their level of fear in contracting the virus. In-person treatment also puts our therapists, clinicians and social workers at a much higher risk of contracting the virus as well,” says Anna Moffit, Executive Director of NAMI Dane County. “This is an unprecedented event, and we believe we must take this bold action in order to save lives and maintain an emotionally healthy community.”

Behavioral support providers recognize that social distancing, school closures and employment losses are having a significant impact on individuals’ mental health. As community members need additional mental health support, these organizations are requesting an emergency waiver in order to increase funds for implementing telehealth services in our community. This emergency waiver would allow the administration to release additional Medicaid funding in order to provide telehealth services in the state of Wisconsin.

“Telehealth is the current option to maintain connection and provide support to those most in need. We must also support the sustainability of Medicaid funded behavioral health agencies who are doing this important work by providing compensation for these vital telehealth services,” says Dani Rischall, Executive Director of Chrysalis. “The need for a variety of behavioral services, including peer support, are only going to increase as we navigate these trying times and we need as many providers as possible to remain in the workforce to be available to meet the needs of our community.”

The [World Health Organization](#) also emphasizes the importance of taking precautions in order to ensure people who live with mental health or substance use disorders continue to seek treatment and support during the current COVID-19 pandemic in the community.

Many of the behavioral health providers need sustained funding in order to ensure the ongoing existence of their organization. Increased Medicaid funding would help recovery-focused organizations continue to provide mental health support.

“In a time where depression, isolation and uncertainty is at an all time high we cannot stop treatment for the most vulnerable amongst us,” explains Myra McNair, LMFT, Executive Director of Anesis Therapy Center. “This is a time for us to come together to use the resources and technology we have in our community so we can continue best practices and services like psychotherapy, psychiatry, peer support and AODA treatment during this time of crisis.”

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**About NAMI Dane County**

*[NAMI Dane County](#) is the founding chapter of the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by mental illness. NAMI Dane County provides education, support, and advocacy for people affected by mental illness in Dane County.*

**About Chrysalis**

*[Chrysalis](#) is a non-profit organization serving the Madison community. Chrysalis provides community-based Supported Employment and Vocational Peer Support Programs to individuals living with mental health conditions.*

**About Anesis Therapy Center**

*[Anesis Therapy](#) is a state certified clinic that provides mental health, substance abuse and case management services. Anesis provides therapy for individuals, couples, families, children and adolescents and currently has two clinical sites located on the north and west side of Madison.*