



# STRENGTHENING OUR MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

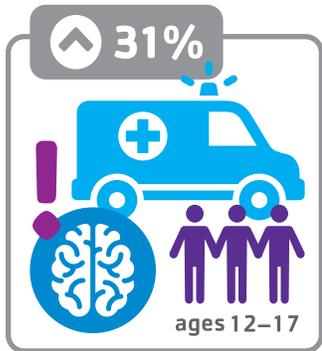
## C A S E F O R S U P P O R T



**OUR MISSION.** The YMCA of Greater Seattle (the Y) is committed to building a community where all people, especially the young, are encouraged to develop their fullest potential in spirit, mind and body.

### WE EMBRACE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS.

Our programs and services seek to address all aspects of health to include physical, mental and emotional, social/relational, spiritual/cultural, and community well-being. We take a trauma-informed approach in the delivery of our programs and services – considering an individual’s lived experiences, both past and present, to promote healing, health, and belonging.



### MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The physical and emotional toll of the past year is profound: **the region saw 50,000 more Medicaid applicants**, and a 6% increase in calls to behavioral health crisis lines.<sup>6</sup> Health officials have cautioned that recovery following a disaster or crisis can trigger post-traumatic stress particularly among youth, as they experience social isolation, and other adverse impacts.

The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in four people under the age of 18 have struggled with suicidal thoughts within the last 30 days since the start of the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Over this same period, **emergency visits for mental health issues nationwide**

**jumped by 31% among 12 to 17 year olds.**<sup>8</sup> And this past spring, Seattle Children’s Hospital reported daily admission of at least one or two youth in mental health crisis.<sup>9</sup>



### HOW WE ARE RESPONDING.

Over the past year, we expanded our counseling services to people of all ages to address the growing need for mental health and substance use services, **servicing more than 1,545 people through our behavioral health programs – a 15% increase** from 2019. In addition, our crisis response teams, responded to 1,027 families experiencing immediate and urgent crisis within two hours – 85% of those families remained in-tact with in-home comprehensive services.<sup>10</sup>

## Looking Toward 2025

**HEALTHY ACTIVITIES, HEALTHY BEHAVIORS.** At the Y, we will continue to be vigilant in assessing the community’s needs to integrate our mental and behavioral health services. Over the next four years, we will do our part to strengthen our region’s mental and behavioral health system by safely re-opening our branches as gathering places to rebuild community and relationships, as well as buildout new programs that address whole person health for all in spirit, mind, and body, particularly for our youth and young adults.

**INTEGRATING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING.** Social emotional learning is the process through which all young people acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and

show empathy for others, and make responsible and caring decisions.<sup>11</sup> To further support and bolster the mental/behavioral health of our young people, we will integrate [social emotional learning](#) into all YMCA youth development programs and service to equip our young people to make positive & future oriented choices.

## Joining Us > How You Can Help

As our region continues the process of recovery and healing, we are grateful for our philanthropic and government partners. In 2021, our state legislature made unprecedented investments to expand access to mental and behavioral health supports. Philanthropic partners like Ballmer Group are also investing in the mental and behavioral health system's workforce to ensure there is a pipeline of behavioral health workers (counselors, clinicians, and therapists) representative of the communities we serve.

We need your partnership and support so we can do our part in strengthening our region's mental and behavioral health systems. We will target outreach particularly to individuals from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, who are disproportionately at greater risk of experiencing mental and behavioral health challenges, have the least access to mental health supports, and often confront stigma which may present an additional barrier to seeking help and support.

### By 2025, we will:

- Design, develop, and implement Whole Person Health programs and integrate social emotional learning into our youth development programs and services;
- Increase youth and young adult engagement in healthy activities, healthy behaviors, and learning lifelong healthy habits as well as, provide activities and supports designed to prevent harmful behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide ideation).

To learn more about how you can get involved and help strengthen our mental and behavioral health systems, view [volunteer opportunities](#) or email us at [give@seattlemca.org](mailto:give@seattlemca.org).

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>6</sup> Seattle-King County Health Department, [Key Economic, Social, & Overall Health Impacts in King County](#) as of April 15, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Washington State Department of Health, [Provider Alert: increased concern of suicide risk in youth during COVID-19](#). December 28, 2020

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Mental Health – [Related Emergency Dept. Visits among Children Aged <18 Years During the Covid Pandemic](#), Jan. – October 17, 2020

<sup>9</sup> Seattle Times, [Washington students are facing a mental health crisis. Here's why schools are on the front lines](#), April 7, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Comprehensive services include: mental health, substance use support, crisis response & intervention, foster care placement and transitions, justice systems diversion, and employment & training.

<sup>11</sup> As defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning (See: [CASEL.org](#))



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