



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Andy Beshear, Governor

Eric Friedlander, Secretary

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Kentucky Receives \$7 Million Behavioral Health Grant

Grant will assist with behavioral services after severe weather in Appalachian region

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 30, 2020) – The Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID) received a \$7 million grant to support behavioral health services in the state’s Appalachian region following severe weather in 2019.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently awarded this grant in response to natural disasters, including severe flooding and mudslides that affected the area in 2019. DBHDID, an agency of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), will provide services for adults and school-aged children with the grant.

“Many counties in Eastern Kentucky suffered terrible loss in 2019 and continue to experience the impact of the flooding and mudslides there,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “These grant dollars will help us provide much-needed support to our three Community Mental Health Centers and will greatly enhance their abilities to serve our fellow Kentuckians in the region.”

The Kentucky Disaster Behavioral Health Response Grant will provide crisis services, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, recovery services, and other related supports to individuals in 21 counties in the Appalachian region of Kentucky impacted by the natural disasters.

“Natural disasters have a serious and often lasting impact on the mental health of communities, who experience large scale destruction, home loss, injuries, and often deaths. All of these things, coupled with the fear of disaster happening again, can take a toll on mental health,” said CHFS Secretary Eric Friedlander. “It is critical we have resources to adequately support our crisis response mechanisms in affected areas to assure we can mitigate the psychological impact of these often life-altering, tragic events.”

These 21 counties comprise the geographic service areas for three Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) – Mountain Comprehensive Care, Kentucky River Community Care, and Cumberland River Behavioral Health.

From Feb. 6 to March 10, 2019, many Kentucky counties experienced severe storms that produced prolonged episodes of heavy rain, strong winds, and isolated tornadoes. Storms resulted in flooding, flash-flooding, landslides and mudslides. Declared a disaster on April 17, 2019, the event impacted federal, state, and local roads and bridges; state and local parks; and critical facilities such as utilities, schools, and drainage, water and sewer systems with estimated physical damages totaling \$150 million.

Grant dollars, which cover a 12-month period and are expected to serve 3,000 individuals, will fund a variety of services and supports, including:

- Coordination and assessment of school-based and community-based crisis response capacity and behavioral health services in the grant service region as well as the development of a comprehensive plan to address crisis and behavioral health needs.
- Support and implementation of evidence-based prevention and counseling services within schools, including programs such as Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- On-site mental health and crisis services within schools.
- Community education and outreach.

- Mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services for the uninsured or under-insured adult population and expanded access to evidence-based treatment.
- Recovery support services, including housing, transportation, and employment services.
- Support for community-based Quick Response Teams or enhanced crisis response teams who provide assertive community outreach and engagement for individuals and families in crisis.
- Expanded telehealth services.

“It is critical our communities have the support they need to re-build not only physically, but emotionally, following the occurrence of a natural disaster and widespread destruction,” said DBHDID Commissioner Wendy Morris. “With a strong crisis-response infrastructure, our communities are strong, resilient, and can overcome any tragic event.”

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and health care programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.