NCDHHS Expanding Mental Health Supports for Teachers, School Personnel and Their Families

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is expanding the Hope4Healers Helpline (919-226-2002) to serve North Carolina's teachers, school personnel and their families.

With schools opening in-person and remotely across the state under new health and safety procedures, NCDHHS and the NC Psychological Foundation can provide these personnel with mental health and resilience supports through Hope4Healers. Hope4Healers is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. When teachers, school personnel or family members call the helpline, they will speak to someone who is trained to listen and offer support. They then will be contacted within about a day by a licensed mental health professional for a free, confidential, short-term follow-up by phone or video chat.

"Our children across the state will be best served by educators and school staff who are taking care of their own mental health needs," said NCDHHS Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Kody Kinsley. "Our educators and school teams are working in an unprecedented situation on the front lines of the state's COVID-19 response. We want to make sure they have access to the mental health and resilience supports they may need to feel like their best selves in the classroom – whether they are teaching in-person or remotely."

NCDHHS launched the Hope4Healers Helpline earlier this year (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/new-mental-health-supports-all-north-carolinians-including-health-care-workers) in partnership with the North Carolina Psychological Foundation and has served over 160 people to date. The helpline has been providing mental health and resilience counseling for first responders, health care and child

care professionals, other staff who work in those settings and their families throughout the state who are experiencing stress from being on the front lines of the state's COVID-19 response.

The Hope4Healers initiative (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mental-health-developmental-disabilities-and-substance-abuse/hope4nc-and-hope4healers) builds on the longstanding Hope4NC Helpline (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mental-health-developmental-disabilities-and-substance-abuse/hope4nc-and-hope4healers) (1-855-587-3463) that provides mental health and resilience supports for all North Carolinians.

Hope4Healers continues to recruit additional licensed behavioral health professional volunteers to support this line. Volunteers must register though the NC Training, Exercise and Response Management System (NC TERMS). That system can be accessed through https://terms.ncem.org/TRS (https://terms.ncem.org/TRS/).

Volunteers must follow these steps:

- Create a personal profile in NC TERMS.
- In NC TERMS, click 'Join a Team'; select 'ESF8 – Public Health and Medical Services'; then select 'COVID 19 Medical Response Volunteers.'
- From there select 'Mental/Behavioral Health Personnel' and click 'Request Membership.'
- Volunteers will be contacted for follow-up once their licenses have been validated.

Additional resources and information on staying physically and mentally healthy can be found on the Managing your Overall Health (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/managing-overall-health) and Wellness Resources (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/wellness-resources) webpages on the NCDHHS COVID-19 website: covid19.ncdhhs.gov (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/). You can also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at cdc.gov/coronavirus (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html) for more information

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