

# COUNTY OF KANE



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## **Kane County Health Department Releases 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report**

Media Release - 9/12/24 - The Kane County Health Department (KCHD) and the Kane County Regional Office of Education (ROE), as part of the Kane County System of Care (KCSOC) for Children's Mental Health, organized the 5th Annual Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health on February 2, 2024. Last week, KCHD released a report detailing the event, which identified student-reported needs for mental health support and outlined action steps for young people, schools, parents, and the community.

School mental health professionals and community leaders gathered to hear from eighty students representing eight different high schools across Kane County. The students shared their opinions on existing mental health services and what additional supports are needed. Participating schools included Bartlett High School, Dundee-Crown High School, Elgin High School, Geneva High School, Larkin High School, South Elgin High School, Streamwood High School, and West Aurora High School.

This year, the students identified the following key mental health needs:

1. Enhanced accessibility to trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and gender-affirming mental health resources in schools and the community, with a focus on the unique challenges faced by the Latinx community.
2. Increased knowledge and understanding of mental health challenges among families and school staff to break the cycle of stigma surrounding help-seeking and conversations about mental health.
3. Safe environments and relationships that provide opportunities to further develop social skills, healthy emotional vulnerability, and positive relationships.
4. A desire to feel validated, supported, and seen by parents, caregivers, teachers, mental health staff, and peers.

"Young individuals have firsthand insight into their own mental health experiences and understand what works for them," said Michael Isaacson, Executive Director of KCHD. "It's essential to listen to their voices to ensure the community offers services that truly meet their needs."

This was the 5th youth-focused event hosted by the Kane County System of Care since the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation awarded a seven-year, \$2.3 million grant to the Kane County Health Department in 2018.

The full 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report is available at:

<https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/YVF.aspx>