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Nov. 16, 2022

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Mental Health America, Bazelon Center, and University of Pittsburgh receive \$100,000 Engagement Award for joint project on the campus mental health crisis

Alexandria, VA (Nov. 16, 2022) – Mental Health America (MHA), the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, and the University of Pittsburgh today announced they have been approved for a \$100,000 funding award through the Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards program, an initiative of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). The funds will support their collaborative project on identifying research priorities focused on college campus mental health.

Kelly Davis, MHA associate vice president of peer and youth advocacy, Nev Jones, Ph.D., assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh, and Jalyn Radziminski, a first-year law student and communications manager at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, will lead the engagement project intended to amplify the perspectives of students with complex disability-related needs, serious mental illness, multiple disabilities, and intersecting marginalized racial, sexual/gender, and socioeconomic identities.

“With more and more students experiencing mental health crises and disabilities, it is critical that we center their lived experience to create accessible and responsive higher education environments,” said Davis.

The project leads will convene campus workgroups to generate priorities and research recommendations on mental health crisis response; campus reintegration intervention and practices following a period of acute mental ill-health and/or hospitalization; and psychiatric disability accommodation on campus. In addition, a national convening of

diverse stakeholders will review and co-develop recommendations before a final report is generated.

“It is long past time for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian students with mental health disabilities and lived experiences with the mental health systems to be centered in research,” said Radziminski. “Through this work, we hope to uplift these voices to contribute to academia and, eventually, long-term solutions that address the barriers we face in education settings.”

“One thing that will set this project apart is our attention to issues that other projects and initiatives have tended to shy away from: coercion and police involvement in crisis response and what it looks like to respond differently; supports for the reintegration of students who have been placed on involuntary or voluntary leaves of absence; and disability accommodations in complex situations,” Jones said. “And we’ll do this in a way that simultaneously engages with the ways that race, class, gender, and disability also shape current practices and needed research on alternatives.”

This project is part of a portfolio of projects that PCORI has funded to help develop a community of patients and other stakeholders equipped to participate as partners in comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER) and disseminate PCORI-funded study results. Through the Engagement Award Program, PCORI is creating an expansive network of individuals, communities, and organizations interested in and able to participate in, share, and use patient-centered CER.

“This conference was selected for Engagement Award funding because it will bring together students and other stakeholders to explore critical issues related to CER and communicate PCORI-funded research findings to key stakeholders,” said Greg Martin, PCORI’s acting chief engagement and dissemination officer. “We look forward to working with MHA, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Bazelon Center throughout the course of their yearlong project.”

This MHA-led project and the other projects approved for funding by the PCORI Engagement Award Program were selected through a highly competitive review process in which applications were assessed for their ability to meet PCORI’s engagement goals and objectives, as well as program criteria. For more information, visit [PCORI’s funding to support engagement efforts page](#).

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About Mental Health America

Mental Health America (MHA) is the nation’s leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health of all. MHA’s work is driven by its commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of

overall wellness, including prevention services for all; early identification and intervention for those at risk; integrated care, services, and supports for those who need them; with recovery as the goal. Learn more at [MHAnational.org](https://www.mhanational.org).

About the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

One of the leading Schools of Social Work in the U.S., the [University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work](https://www.ssw.pitt.edu/) is committed to its mission of preparing courageous leaders to transform social work practice, policy, research, and education in a community-engaged and inclusive environment. We build and develop collaborative partnerships to understand, prevent, and ameliorate complex social problems with innovative approaches that promote social justice. The school's three degree programs — Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, Master of Social Work, and Doctor of Philosophy — are taught by one of the most diverse faculties at the University and instill in students a commitment to racial, social, and economic justice.

About the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law protects and advances the civil rights people with mental and developmental disabilities — especially Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and other historically marginalized populations. We envision a society where our constituents with mental disabilities live with autonomy, dignity, and opportunity in welcoming communities supported by law, policy, and practices that help them reach their full potential. For more information, visit [bazelon.org](https://www.bazelon.org). To learn more about our 50-year celebration, visit [Bazelon50.com](https://www.bazelon50.com).

About PCORI

PCORI is an independent, nonprofit organization authorized by Congress in 2010 to fund comparative effectiveness research that will provide patients, their caregivers, and clinicians with the evidence needed to make better-informed health and healthcare decisions. PCORI is committed to seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders to guide its work.