

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Testimony before the
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

Hearing Title
Strengthening Federal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Programs:
Opportunities, Challenges, and Emerging Issues

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Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Burr and members of the Committee, The Biden Administration is committed to addressing the unprecedented mental health and substance use disorder crisis that is affecting adults and children of all races in urban and rural communities across the United States. During the State of the Union, President Biden announced the strategy to address our national mental health crisis as part of his Unity Agenda.¹¹ The three pillars of the President's mental health strategy are: (1) Strengthen System Capacity; (2) Connect Americans to Care; and (3) Support Americans by Creating Healthy Environments. A These three pillars are built on a foundation of research carried out by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) the lead federal agency charged with setting and supporting the national agenda for mental health research. It is my privilege to represent NIMH before you today, and to discuss our ongoing collaborations with partner agencies to support the President's strategy.

The NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the largest biomedical research agency in the world. The NIMH mission is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure. The NIMH Strategic Plan for Research guides the Institute's priorities for funding research, from basic neuroscience aimed at understanding how the brain produces behavior, to translational efforts to develop transformative treatments, to clinical studies that test new approaches in community settings. Indeed, research in this area has made significant progress in several key a

to demonstrate the efficacy of screening for suicide prevention in these settings. A similar study in adults showed that emergency room screening combined with brief interventions and follow-up contacts can reduce suicide attempts by 33 percent. NIMH research has also supported the development of computational methods to identify suicide risk using electronic health records, an approach that has already been implemented in the Army, Veterans Affairs clinics, and many healthcare systems around the United States.⁸ Finally, NIMH research has

