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Paso del Norte Health Foundation and Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute Announce Paso del Norte Center for Mental Health

A Regional Mental Health Policy Center to support initiatives in the Paso del Norte region, fight stigma of mental illness

The Paso del Norte Health Foundation and the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute today announced the launch of the **Paso del Norte Center at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute**, a regional mental health policy center that will provide policy and program guidance for regional initiatives and advance mental health awareness efforts in the Paso del Norte region. The Paso del Norte Center, which will be part of the Meadows Institute, was established by a \$1.5 million grant from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. It will build upon the numerous improvements made to the region's mental health care systems over the past several years.

Enrique Mata, a public health nurse and former senior program officer with the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, was named founding Executive Director.

"The Paso del Norte Health Foundation was integral to the formation of the Meadows Institute and an early leader in recognizing the need for better mental health care in the region, and has been a dedicated, driving force in taking the steps necessary for significant improvement to happen," said Andy Keller, President and CEO of Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. "It is an honor to be a part of this ongoing effort to address the needs unique to El Paso and the wider Paso del Norte region."

In addition to conducting community assessments in 2014, 2017, and an update completed earlier this year, the Meadows Institute has worked on projects with Texas Tech University Health Science Center-El Paso, Emergence Health Network, El Paso Child Guidance Center, El Paso Center for Children, the El Paso Police Department, El Paso County, and other local organizations and stakeholders.

"The El Paso community has made significant strides since we first worked with the Meadows Institute to develop an in-depth assessment of the region's mental health care capabilities in 2014," said Tracy J. Yellen, CEO of the Paso del Norte Community Foundation. "This exciting new venture will integrate all of these previous efforts in an unprecedented way and help guide mental and behavioral health care development, transforming the way behavioral health is understood, evaluated, and improved in Paso del Norte."

The Paso del Norte Center's initial focus will be on technical and awareness support roles to further Paso del Norte Health Foundation's mental health and emotional well-being initiatives, including Think.Change, The El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium, and other regional Consortia.

“The El Paso region has unique challenges when it comes to mental health care, but it also has many opportunities for improvement,” said Sharon Butterworth, mental health advocate, Board Member of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, and a member of the Meadows Institute Board of Directors. “The establishment of a permanent center gives us the capability to tailor policies and treatment options to meet the specific needs of the people who call the Paso del Norte region home. This is a great day for the El Paso community.”

The Paso del Norte Center will have a primary initial focus on El Paso and Hudspeth counties in Texas. The Center plans to later expand into Dona Ana, Luna, and Otero counties in Southern New Mexico; and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The Center will also work to inform policy and practice for other surrounding communities.

The Meadows Institute’s team of mental health policy and implementation experts will engage regularly with regional consortia members to plan and implement best practices for the improvement of regional mental health and emotional well-being, improving health care systems that serve children, youth, and adults in the Paso del Norte Region.

“This is a game-changing investment in a healthier, stronger future for our friends, families, and communities, and represents a huge step forward for mental and behavioral health care in the region,” said Enrique Mata, Executive Director. “The Paso del Norte Center will be a true community partnership that brings multiple stakeholders together in a focused, regional approach to mental health care that will mean more awareness, earlier interventions, and better outcomes.”

Tracy Yellen and Andy Keller will host a Facebook Live discussion about the new center on Wednesday, July 28, at 1:00 p.m. CT, 12:00 p.m. MT. For more information or to join the event, visit www.facebook.com/PdNHFoundation.

About Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Launched in 2014, the Meadows Institute helps legislators, state officials, members of the judiciary, and local, state, and national leaders identify equitable systemic solutions to mental health needs and has become Texas’s most trusted source for data-driven mental health policy. The Meadows Institute is making a significant impact in multiple areas, helping Texas and national leaders shift the focus of new investments toward early intervention, addressing the mental health crisis in our jails and emergency rooms, and helping all people with mental health needs recover and be well. Learn more at <https://mmhpi.org>.

About the Paso del Norte Health Foundation

The Paso del Norte Health Foundation (Health Foundation) leads, leverages, and invests in initiatives, programs, and policies to promote health and prevent disease in the Paso del Norte region. The Health Foundation was established in 1995 from the sale of Providence Memorial Hospital to Tenet Healthcare Corporation. The Health Foundation seeks to ensure that the people living in far west Texas, southern New Mexico and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, have the knowledge, resources and skills to lead healthy lives.

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