

National Conference on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Reform Scheduled for Boston Area, May 2020

Progress Made Possible Stresses Hope, Proven Effectiveness When Communities Work Together



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Local, state and national leaders committed to improving outcomes for those in the criminal justice system with underlying behavioral health issues, will gather this May in Middlesex County, Mass. to discuss innovative diversion, treatment and re-entry initiatives.

The Institute for Behavioral Healthcare Improvement and the Mental Health Foundation will co-host the Progress Made Possible: Evidence, Insight & More from the Frontline of Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Reform Conference at the Boston Marriott Burlington from May 17-19, 2020. The conference will focus on the importance of sharing valuable lessons from those working at the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice.

The Progress Made Possible Conference will build on the success of previous programs presented in San Antonio, TX, and Miami, FL in 2017, hosted respectively by Leon Evans, former CEO of the Health Care Services (San Antonio) and Miami-Dade Judge Steven Leifman, a leading advocate for behavioral health reform in criminal justice. Both Evans and Leifman are scheduled to be featured presenters at the Boston area event.

Organizers tapped Middlesex County as the host location for this year's conference because its leadership has gained national attention in recent years for its forward-thinking efforts, including its selection as one of three national pilot sites for Arnold Ventures' Data Driven Justice Initiative. DDJI seeks to shape cost-effective public policy and evidence-based interventions.

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and Massachusetts Association for Mental Health President and CEO Danna Mauch, who have demonstrated strong leadership working with other Massachusetts officials on broad reform efforts, will be featured presenters at the conference. Koutoujian and Mauch

Co-Chair the Middlesex County Restoration Commission, a 13-member stakeholder group tasked with piloting a center to help support law enforcement diversion efforts in New England's most populous county, while also expanding the community capacity for behavioral health treatment.

"To have the organizers select Middlesex County as the site for this conference is recognition of the outstanding work stakeholders across Middlesex and the Commonwealth are doing on a daily basis to confront the mental health and substance use crises facing our communities," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "Each day we are working across systems to develop sustainable initiatives designed to support those most in need with the goal of improving outcomes for individuals and families."

"I'm excited to join with Sheriff Koutoujian, the Institute for Behavioral Healthcare Improvement and the Mental Health Foundation to bring this important conference to Massachusetts," Mauch said. "Participants will not only have the opportunity to hear about emerging and evidence-based practices from national experts but also learn about ways to effectively implement them in their own jurisdictions."

The program seeks to bring together diverse stakeholders, including public officials, public safety leaders, behavioral health advocates, consumers, and providers. It is intended to serve as a catalyst for a more inclusive approach to behavioral health policy and delivery.

Conference sessions and other speakers will showcase valuable insight from Massachusetts' ongoing experiences to recreate its approach to behavioral health challenges, along with perspective from presenters representing initiatives and communities across the country.

The Institute for Behavioral Healthcare Improvement and the Mental Health Foundation are both not-for-profit organizations, based in the Albany, NY area, focused on promoting the use of evidence-based practices to end stigma and improve outcomes for people, families, and communities facing the challenges of behavioral health problems.

For full information about the program, registration and sponsorship opportunities visit www.mentalhealthfoundation.net. Phone: 518-694-5364



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