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Snohomish County Initiates COVID-19 Outreach Program for Mental Wellbeing

Partnering with Volunteers of America Western Washington will provide mental wellbeing support to residents

EVERETT, Wash., July 10, 2020 – Today, Snohomish County’s Department of Human Services announced the creation of the Community COVID Outreach Counselors Program to provide emotional support services to residents of Snohomish County whose mental health has been impacted by COVID-19. This program will be in partnership with Volunteers of America Western Washington, is supported by federal CARES Act funding, and addresses the mental health crisis that is co-occurring with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We know that pandemics like COVID-19 have a tremendously negative impact on both physical and mental health,” said Snohomish County Director of Human Services Mary Jane Brell Vujovic. “We have set up very effective care for those who contract the virus and are striving to do more in providing support to our community members. This new program will help us mitigate the negative outcomes from the stress, anxiety, and depression triggered by the pandemic.”

Snohomish County residents living through the COVID pandemic will experience varying degrees of anxiety, trauma, stress and depression. The COVID Outreach Counselors program is intended to help residents better recover and rebuild their lives. Community COVID Outreach Counselors will provide short-term interventions designed to provide emotional support and to connect residents with needed services and resources. Community COVID Outreach Counselors’ approach is strength-based, anonymous, outreach-oriented, conducted in non-traditional sites and is designed to strengthen existing community support systems.

The COVID Outreach Counselors Program will support impacted residents across Snohomish County who reach out for support associated with COVID related anxiety, trauma, stress and depression. Community COVID Outreach Counselors will receive direct referrals as well as referrals from 211, family members, friends, co-workers, teachers, neighbors and others concerned about how individuals are coping with COVID induced changes. The Counselors will provide short-term interventions that help citizens understand their current situation and reactions. To access the service, residents in need may call 2-1-1.

The **Snohomish County Human Services Department** helps all persons meet their basic needs and develop their potential by providing timely, effective human services and building community. The Division of Behavioral Health and Veterans Services directly provides and administers a wide range of programs that aid and support for our most vulnerable citizens.

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