

PROJECT PREVENT

We believe the most efficient use of resources is to focus on early intervention services. Project Prevent is provided to students from eleven to eighteen years of age, and encourages practices that promote mental health, and ending stigma.

Many mental health problems emerge in late childhood and early adolescence. Recent studies have identified mental health problems - in particular depression, as the largest cause of the burden of disease among young people. Poor mental health has an effect on the wider health and development of adolescents and is associated with several health and social outcomes such as higher alcohol, tobacco and illicit substances use, adolescent pregnancy, school dropout and delinquent behaviors.

This program also helps schools meet the mental health needs of children through staff training, parent education and outreach, and student engagement. With our partnership with PROJECT375 and Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago Foundation we seek to improve the school-level infrastructure and capacity to sustain a three-tiered system of behavioral health supports in schools. This public health model has been shown to be an effective method to successfully deliver behavioral health services in schools. To date, Lurie Children's has assisted 17 Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to develop teams of school-based professionals who collaboratively address students' social, emotional and behavioral issues that impact school functioning. With the support of PROJECT375 over the next 5 years, Lurie Children will grow this model to reach more than 200 schools and impact over 300,000 children throughout the city. PROJECTPREVENT will utilize the proposed Training, Education and Advocacy Model for Mental Health: Working to improve mental health care in our schools. This proposed model includes:

Training for school professionals, parents, students. Everyone needs to understand mental health concerns so that we can reduce stigma and create a safe and caring learning environment for all.

Education for social workers and teachers to help them identify the at-risk youth, educate them on coping skills and connect them to care teams to help them change behaviors.

Advocacy for access to the right care at the right time for children in need of mental health services. The work would focus on helping schools connect with community providers as well as statewide efforts to improve mental health policies and Medicaid reimbursement for services provided.

