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**SHAW LOCAL**  
News Network

# Upcoming mental health town hall a chance for all to be heard



## COMMUNITY VOICES

**Leonetta Rizzi**

For more than 70 years, Mental Health America has led the observance of May as Mental Health Month by reaching millions of people through the media, events and screenings. The McHenry County Mental Health Board encourages our community to join us in spreading the word that mental health is essential to overall health.

We are seeking public input during Mental Health Month and invite community members to the annual Town Hall Meeting at 5 p.m. May 9 at 620 Dakota St., Crystal Lake. Attendees will have opportunities to discuss mental health, substance use disorder, and intellectual and developmental disability-related services and needs for our community.

Here are the facts to provide greater understanding of mental health, substance use disorders and intellectual development disabilities:

In the U.S., 1 in 5 people have a mental illness each year. Of these individuals, one-third do not seek help, and one-half are untreated. In McHenry County, there are about 61,600 people with a mental illness, while 20,500 do not seek help and 30,800 are untreated.

In the U.S, almost 20 million individuals (6% of the population) older than 12 years of age battle with a substance use disorder and overall, about 8.5 million American adults (2%) suffered from both a mental health disorder and a substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorders. In

McHenry County, this translates to 18,480 individuals with a substance use disorder and 6,160 with both a mental health and substance use disorder.

From an overall health perspective, those with mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities and substance use disorders issues are at greater risk for chronic diseases like diabetes, liver failure, and cancer. Many times, these chronic diseases are caught late and are left untreated.

On average, 1 in 10 individuals have a family member with an intellectual/developmental disability.

In the past 10 years, one of the most significant changes is in intellectual/developmental disability; incidences of autism have increased more than 300% and incidences of ADHD have increased by 33%.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, in the U.S., more people are dying from suicide, drug and alcohol poisoning, and alcoholic liver disease than any other time in recorded history. These are being categorized as "Deaths of Despair."

Death by suicide occurs every 11 minutes and is the second-leading cause of death among teens.

Death by overdose has increased and is now twice that of deaths by suicide.

McHenry County deaths of despair in 2023 included 38 suicides and 47 overdoses.

In McHenry County, your Mental Health Board and our network of providers continues to focus on preventing deaths of despair.

Please help by being part of the solution!

As Mental Health Awareness Month, May is a time for our community to acknowledge the importance of mental

health and take action to ensure that individuals with mental health, substance use disorder, and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

Every voice matters and MCMHB wants to hear from residents, like you, at this important Town Hall.

The voice of McHenry County residents is an important part of the Mental Health Board's planning process and development of plans for future service needs.

At the Town Hall on May 9, Connee Meschini, the Mental Health Board president, will welcome the community and present the Board and staff. The agenda for the evening will include three breakout sessions (e.g. Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities) for public feedback.

New to the forum this year, one conference room will be designated for Spanish-speaking residents. Sign language and other interpreters can be made available within 48-hour notice. The public may submit written testimony in advance or at the meeting via email to informationrequest@mc708.org.

Resident input is needed to contribute to the local conversation by sharing their stories of success and/or offering ideas for system improvement and enhancement.

For further information contact, the Mental Health Board at 815-455-2828 or visit MC708.org.

• *Leonetta Rizzi is the executive director of the McHenry County Mental Health Board.*

## LOTTERY

### ILLINOIS LOTTERY

**Midday Pick 3:** 2-2-2 (2)  
**Midday Pick 4:** 3-8-2-0 (9)  
**Lucky Day Lotto Midday:**  
10-16-19-23-33  
**Lotto jackpot:** \$2.75 million

### MEGA MILLIONS

**Est. jackpot:** \$97 million

### POWERBALL

**Est. jackpot:** \$31 million

### INDIANA LOTTERY

**Daily 3 Midday:** 8-1-7 (2)  
**Daily 4 Midday:** 3-6-5-1 (2)  
**Est. Lotto jackpot:** \$9.1 million

### WISCONSIN LOTTERY

**Pick 3 Midday:** 2-8-2  
**Pick 4 Midday:** 0-8-1-6

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## ON THE COVER

**Jordan Toma, a New Jersey-based motivational speaker, hands out giveaway items to Woodstock North High School students April 9.**

See story on page 3.

Photo provided

## CORRECTIONS

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