

Health Department Receives Funding for Behavioral Health Clinicians in St. Mary's County Schools

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 05/21/2019

Leonardtown, MD - May 21, 2019 – St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) will be partnering with St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) in the 2019-2020 school year to place Behavioral Health Clinicians in each of the high schools, middle schools and Fairlead Academies. These clinicians will provide prevention and intervention services for students, focusing on topics such as:

- Self-monitoring mood
- Anger management
- Depression and anxiety
- Risk for substance use
- Dealing with family substance use
- Social and emotional skills

When adolescents learn social-emotional skills such as self-monitoring mood and addressing signs of anxiety, depression, and anger, they reduce their risk for substance use and can improve functioning at home, in school, with peers, and within the community.

"Student mental health and well being is priority in SMCPS and this partnership will provide additional tools for working with the whole child," says Dr. James Scott Smith, SMCPS Superintendent.

Students at risk for mental health and substance-related disorders will participate in a twelve-week prevention/intervention program that focuses on mental health and wellness, building resiliency, and learning coping skills using a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach. This program builds upon a successful pilot model that SMCHD and SMCPS have implemented in one school over the past two years.

"With increased youth mental health and substance use concerns across the country, these prevention and intervention services in school-based settings are a critical component of improved long-term behavioral health outcomes," said Tammy Loewe, Behavioral Health Program Director at SMCHD.

To learn more about local behavioral health services, visit: <http://www.smchd.org/behavioralhealth/>

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