

A photograph of two women embracing, with a large yellow arrow pointing upwards overlaid on the image. The woman on the left is smiling and has her eyes closed, while the woman on the right has her back to the camera. The image has a reddish-pink tint.

**MAY 2023**

**MENTAL HEALTH  
PROGRESS REPORT**

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The University of Minnesota recognizes the critical need to address and support student mental health. From day one of my administration, we have taken action to meet that need, most focused through the launch of PRISMH, the President’s Initiative for Student Mental Health, two summers ago. PRISMH is a key deliverable of MPact 2025, and through that lens, we’ve made important progress, including through new investments in mental health resources and broadening existing initiatives and centering supportive mental health practices in our learning environments. Simply put, supporting student wellbeing is a core element of delivering the University’s mission.

As a national leader in this work, the University is creating a community of care, helping students to flourish now and in the future. In fact, at the Association of Land Grant Universities (APLU) Mental Health Summit last year, one of their recommended best practices was to create an institutional task force like the one we’ve created through PRISMH. And through MPact 2025, the University is committed to deepening its leadership to ensure sustainability at the dawn of year three of PRISMH.

My profound gratitude goes out to countless leaders and healers across the University System for their sustained support, including Dr. Tabitha Grier-Reed, Associate Dean and Professor in the College of Education and Human Development and Maggie Towle, Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, who co-chair this work, the PRISMH committee and its workgroups, and Megan Sweet in the Office of the President. I also want to recognize student leaders across the System, whose advocacy and partnership has strengthened and enriched our efforts.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Gabel', with a small dot at the end.

*President Joan T.A. Gabel*

# PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

## Prevention/Upstream Efforts



### Meditation App for Student-Athletes

In partnership with the B1G Mental Health Cabinet, we continue to promote the Calm app and many of our athletes use this app in team settings, most often for meditations and mindfulness. Since the end of August 2022, we have had **398 individuals** activate their Calm account and the biggest activations have come from the music feature and sleep stories.



### HLC Quality Initiative

UMN's HLC Quality Initiative, Transforming Learning Environments in Support of Student Mental Health, is one of the efforts supported by PRISMH's Faculty Work Group in partnership with the University's Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) and Center for Education Innovation (CEI). This initiative is our reaccreditation project for the Higher Learning Commission, and will engage instructors and academic leaders on the development and implementation of interventions to mitigate course and academic-related stress in the learning environment. Institutional and collegiate leadership will promote, encourage, and work with academic units to implement strategies consistent with inclusive teaching and course design, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and teaching with flexibility.

# Research



## Seed Grants

PRISMH and the [Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain](#) partnered to offer a [seed grant program](#) focused on investigating upstream causes, antecedents, and risk factors for mental health problems. This program was part of the recommendations of the research workgroup in year one, and its execution is an exciting year two outcome. Demonstrating how we are leveraging every resource, an initial \$50,000 PRISMH investment was, through partnership and strategic collaboration, quadrupled into a \$200,000 seed grant program. Out of several excellent proposals, two awards were granted (rather than one) addressing root causes and intervention. The following projects are expected to be completed in 2024:



- **Dr. Kal Ip, a faculty member in the Institute of Child Development**, will address root causes and focus upstream by investigating the role of structural racism in adolescent mental health.



- **Dr. Katie Cullen of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences** will lead implementation and study of the Imagination Studio, refining the curriculum, further discerning efficacy to reduce symptoms, and advance flourishing for UMN college students who suffer from depression.

## Creativity Camp

University Medical School Research in Adolescent Depression Lab researchers are focused on adolescent mental health to advance understanding of the biology of mood disorders (e.g. depression and bipolar disorder) in adolescents, and to test how new investigational treatments may work to restore health in young people. In the summer of 2022, adolescents 12-17 participated in a UMN research study consisting of a 2-week-long Creativity Camp with activities including creative writing, origami, and visual arts. During the summer of 2023, three more cohorts of the Camp will be held.



## [From Cultural Mismatch to Cultural Health Conference](#)

With a focus on diversity and culture, the PRISMH task force endorsed and supported the *From Cultural Mismatch to Cultural Health Virtual Conference*, organized by co-chair Dr. Tabitha Grier-Reed, licensed psychologist and APA Fellow. Aligning with a public health approach to mental health, the conference provided opportunities for the consideration of culture in health/well-being, including culturally specific practices, intersections between cultural health and mental health, and possibilities for institutional transformation. Once again leveraging every resource, Dr. Grier-Reed leveraged her Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) project and scholarly interests to advance the cultural reach and focus of PRISMH.



### From **Cultural Mismatch** to **Cultural Health**

Explore ways cultural health is lived out, practiced, and fostered through research, rituals, and the everyday lives of people.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



BraVada Garrett-Akinsanya, PhD, LP



Karen Diver

- The conference included **15 breakout sessions**, including speakers such as Dr. Talee Vang who serves on the Governor's Culturally Informed and Culturally Responsive Mental Health Task Force. Opening and closing keynotes featured Dr. BraVada Garrett-Akinsanya, licensed psychologist, and Karen Diver, Senior Advisor to the President on Native American Affairs.
- A total of **492 people from 18 states and six countries** registered for the conference, including **454 Minnesota community members, scholars, and students**. Three hundred and twenty-six people participated during the one-day event exploring cultural health: what it is, how we do it, how we study it, and how we can promote and expand it.

Dr. Grier-Reed made keynote recordings available upon request and established two mini-grants to support invited proposals aimed at advancing cultural health on the Morris and Twin Cities campuses over the coming academic year.

# Allyship and Detection

## CFANS Wellness Navigator

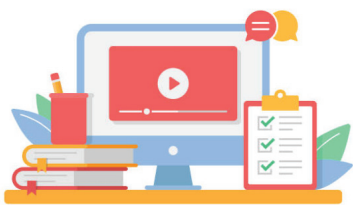
Embedded within the CFANS Advising and One Stop Student Center, this role serves to connect CFANS students with resources that support their wellbeing needs. The Wellness Navigator offers short-term assistance to students who are impacted by personal health and wellbeing challenges. Further, the role conducts an initial triage service and brief risk assessment to determine level of care and provides referrals to campus resources such as Boynton, Student Counseling Services, Disability Resource Center, Nutritious U Food Pantry, and One Stop Emergency Funds.



*Rose Simon,  
CFANS Wellness Navigator*

## Training Modules for Faculty and Staff

- **Responding to Student Suicidality:** Created through a systemwide, interdisciplinary collaboration for the Mental Health Advocates program—led by Student Counseling Services and Boynton Health and endorsed by PRISMH—the Responding to Student Suicidality training module on Canvas equips faculty and staff with guidance on how to respond to the difficult topic of student suicidality.
- **Disability accommodations/Universal design trainings for faculty:** Over the past five years, the University of Minnesota has experienced a significant increase in students seeking disability accommodations in our courses. To address this increase, the Office of the Provost and Office for Equity and Diversity partnered to implement a required online course for all faculty and instructors on disability accommodations and inclusive course design, with a particular focus on designing courses to support student mental health. The development and implementation of this course closely follows recommendations from the Task Force on Disability Accommodations in the Learning Environment and [University governance](#).
- **Making Effective Referrals:** “Making Effective Referrals” is a pilot video that is the first in a series aimed at helping UMN faculty and staff build their competence and confidence in supporting student mental health. This content was adapted from the Mental Health Advocates curriculum by a team of mental health, public health, and student affairs professionals on behalf of the President’s Initiative for Student Mental Health at the University of Minnesota.



# Services and Treatment

## Mental Health Advocates Expansion

The Mental Health Advocates initiative has been in place on the Twin Cities campus since 2016 as a professional development training for employees to learn skills to promote student mental health.

This year the training has been adapted for the Morris campus in partnership with Morris faculty, administrators, and student affairs colleagues, Academic Technology Support Services, the Center for Educational Innovation, counseling directors from across the system, and the Twin Cities Mental Health Advocates workgroup.



This employee-facing initiative will launch at Morris this summer as a fully asynchronous product, available in an “a la carte” model for Morris employees to select the topics that are most relevant to their professional growth. The updated training package will launch on the Twin Cities campus in the fall, and we will explore expansion to Crookston, Duluth, and Rochester in 2024.

## Systemwide Mental Health Learning and Collaboration Network

PRISMH and the Systemwide Mental Health Learning and Collaboration Network have created an inventory of the types of telehealth services currently provided systemwide.



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**The group proposed the creation of an internal systemwide telehealth network of therapists and a psychiatric nurse practitioner to serve students across the system. This proposal aims to better meet student demand for counseling and psychiatric medication appointments, as there is no anticipated decline in demand for these services.**

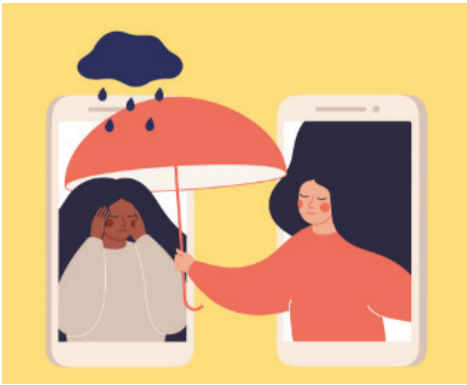
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Additionally, this proposal seeks to provide culturally appropriate mental health care to support the retention of and graduation rates for underrepresented minority students struggling with mental health symptoms. Consultation with various stakeholders is currently taking place and, if endorsed, funding would need to be identified.





# Communications



## MyU portal

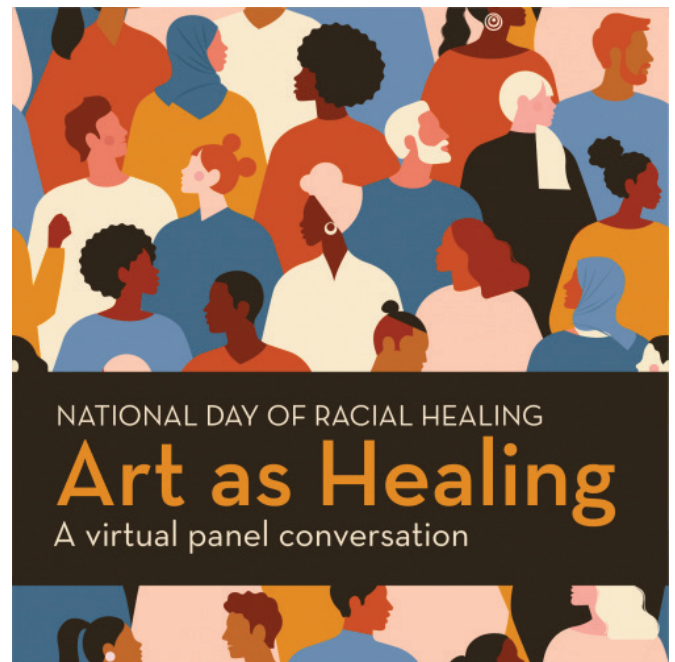
PRISMH has outlined an approach to launch a **Student Mental Health + Wellbeing tab** on the MyU Portal. The strategy recognizes the differing needs of each campus and recommends developing a virtual well-being center on each campus for access (wayfinding) to resources, programs, and services. The project requires prioritization from MyU and other partners, and the goal is to have it underway by summer 2023, with a rollout in the 2023-24 school year.

## Public Health Awareness/Resources Campaign

Looking ahead, PRISMH has identified and prioritized the development of a Health Campaign Strategy that maximizes communication conduits and mechanisms, and emphasizes public health policy, system, and environmental considerations in its messaging.

## National Day of Racial Healing - Art as Healing

In January, UMN held its **third annual** event in recognition of the National Day of Racial Healing. This year's event, Art as Healing, was a virtual conversation hosted by **Vice President Mercedes Ramírez Fernández**, with a circle of panelists reflecting on art as a healing tool in observance of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's annual National Day of Racial Healing. Featured artists included Geno Okok, Thomasina Petrus, Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay, and UMN faculty Talvin Wilks and Cindy Garcia, who shared their stories through conversation facilitated by Makeda Zulu, Executive Director of the Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center.



## [2022](#) and [2023](#) annual PRISMH reports to the Board of Regents

# Campus Spotlights

## CROOKSTON

### CRISIS RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

Orientation preparation

- Training Community Advisors and Student Orientation Leaders
- Distribution of phone stickers and fridge magnets at orientation

Early identification and response

- Wellness Care Team
- Academic Care Team

Coordinate annual **Question. Persuade. Refer.** suicide prevention training

## MORRIS

### ACADEMIC INFUSION

Offered during the fall, spring and summer bridge program sessions, Reclaiming Happiness: Psy1026 teaches evidenced-based positive psychology concepts such as optimism, gratitude, positive emotions, and the importance of positive relationships. Wait lists are common for this particular course, which demonstrates the need students have for some positivity and happiness in their lives.

## DULUTH

### BROAD FOCUS ON WELLBEING

As the first campus to offer Let's Talk and Pet Away Worry and Stress (PAWS), UMD's Student Life Wellbeing and Wellness Index provides a way of tracking efforts that support the dimensions, subdimensions, and facilitators of student wellbeing. In this way, Student Life ensures that the work we do for and with students relates strongly to their wellbeing. In addition, we are able to see changes over time and identify program and service gaps.

## ROCHESTER

### DEEPENING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Mental Health Ambassador Program- continued to grow and thrive.
- Launched Grief & Loss support group Fall 2022.
- Started Mental Health Lunch Series Spring 2023.
- Developing Okanagan Charter and collaborating with Community of Wellbeing Strategic Team - in becoming a Health Promoting Campus.

## TWIN CITIES

### MEETING THE NEED FOR QUICK ACCESS/ON-DEMAND SERVICES

- Learn to Live (24/7) - online
- Crisis line and text line (24/7)
- Let's Talk (drop in consultation)
- Urgent Crisis Counseling (business hours)
- Affinity/Accountability groups
- Skills Workshops
- Urgent and non-urgent consultation to faculty, staff, students, parents