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## **Speakers Series Highlights Nashville's Mental Health Needs and Collaborations for Care**

**Nashville, Tennessee** – Today, Nashville Health and the Metro Public Health Department hosted national and local leaders for a community-wide conversation, *Understanding Mental Health Needs and Collaborations for Care*, to improve mental health and well-being in our city.

Recently-released findings from the Nashville Community Health + Well-being Survey show Davidson County residents report having 5.3 poor mental health days in a 30-day period. This is a full day more than Nashville's peer cities – Austin, TX (3.3 days) and Charlotte, NC (3.4 days) - and outpaces the state and national average. Nashvillians who never graduated high school self-reported more than 10 poor mental health days each month, while those with a college degree reported an average of 4.8 poor mental health days.

“Mental health needs are increasing throughout the nation among all groups, but Nashville represents a pocket of even greater need,” said Paul Gionfriddo, CEO of Mental Health America. “But as we discussed today, there are ways we can come together and mobilize resources – for our children in schools, for our adults in the workplace, and for everyone in our communities – to alter these trends, reduce the deep impact of stress and trauma, and bend the curve back down.”

The third event in the *All In: Conversations on Health in Nashville* Speaker Series, held at Lipscomb University, focused on Nashville's most critical mental health challenges and featured a panel of speakers: Paul Gionfriddo, CEO of Mental Health America, Amanda Bracht, SVP of Clinical Services at the Mental Health Cooperative, Todd Henry, Deputy Chief of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department and Dr. Greg James, Ascension Saint Thomas Chief Clinical Officer and Dean of the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center Nashville campus.

**Deputy Chief of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Todd Henry** shared details about the city's new diversion program to provide individuals battling mental illnesses with access care, rather than allowing them to fall into the criminal justice system.

“While we feel people with mental illness are better off with us than on the street with no food, medication or housing, we know there are better treatment options available with trained mental health professionals,” said Henry. “I’m grateful to be a part of this community wide effort to work together to find the right solutions.”

The **Mental Health Cooperative’s Senior Vice President of Clinical Services Amanda Bracht** participated in the event to get the word out to the community that effective treatment is available. The Mental Health Cooperative’s Crisis Treatment Center in Nashville serves individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis 24/7 at no cost. They also have locations across Middle and East Tennessee.

“Studies show that 70-90% of individuals with mental illness see improvement in their symptoms and quality of life after participating in some form of treatment and we see that first hand,” said Bracht. “We believe there is life after diagnosis, and that our challenges do not define who we are.”

While the access to mental health is improving in Nashville, all of the leaders in attendance agreed, we need to do a better job of preventing crises from happening in the first place.

By sharing concerns and raising awareness, NashvilleHealth’s goal with the All In Speaker Series is to find implementable solutions to make Nashville a healthier and happier place for all residents.

“We see that when silos break down and collaboration happens, health outcomes begin to change in a sustainable way,” said **Caroline Young, Executive Director of NashvilleHealth**.

**About NashvilleHealth** - NashvilleHealth is dedicated to making Nashville-Davidson County one of the healthiest places to live in the state and the nation by achieving measurable gains in the health of all residents. Founded by physician and former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D., our goal is to create a culture of health and well-being by serving as a convener to open dialogue, aligning resources and building smart strategic partnerships to move the needle on health outcomes and close the gap in health disparities. For more information, visit [nashvillehealth.org](http://nashvillehealth.org).

**About Metro Public Health Department** - The mission of the Metro Public Health Department (MPHD) is to protect, improve and sustain health and well-being for all people in Metropolitan Nashville. As Nashville’s Local Health Department, we provide and connect people to essential public health services, we enforce health regulations and we lead and support collaborative efforts to create healthy conditions for everyone in Nashville. For more information, visit [health.nashville.gov](http://health.nashville.gov).