

# Protect Our Children's Mental Health

## Expand Access to Preventative Healthcare

### ***North Carolina's Youth Mental Health Epidemic is Growing***

Every statistic supports what we already know—our youth mental health crisis is worsening. These numbers will improve only when we increase preventative care access.

- North Carolina youth who have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year has [doubled from 8% in 2015 to 17% in 2022](#)
- [22% of high school students](#)—and 48% of LGBTQ students—have contemplated suicide in the last 12 months
- In 2020, suicide was the [leading cause of death for North Carolina children ages 10-14](#)

When we catch problems early, we can prevent the crises that threaten our kids' health and development and overburden our workforce. But, too often, preventative care isn't provided because of patient [cost barriers and mental health stigma](#).

### ***FHLI is Expanding Children's Access to Preventative Mental Healthcare***

Through a multi-year Duke Endowment grant, FHLI is:

- Partnering with NC AHEC to design a training curriculum for behavioral health professionals. It covers mental health prevention, assessment, and intervention for children, adolescents, and their families. It is delivered through a year-long fellowship.
- Recruiting 40-50 behavioral health professionals and graduate students in two cohorts (in 2022 and 2023) to participate in this year-long fellowship, which includes didactic workshops and case discussions
- Advocating for policy and legislative changes to expand preventative care access for mental health

### ***FHLI Needs Your Feedback and Support***

*To remove the barriers to preventative care access and use, FHLI is developing a policy to give children the option of receiving a free annual mental health wellness visit. All North Carolina insurers would cover the cost of this visit—just as they do today for a physical.*

Creating a policy to address our youth mental health crisis is our priority. It is important to work with our partners to address this policy's implications—including cost and workforce.

For more information or to provide your feedback, contact Lisa Tyndall, PhD, LMFT, Interim Director of the FHLI Center of Excellence for Integrated Care, at [lisa.tyndall@foundationhli.org](mailto:lisa.tyndall@foundationhli.org).



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