



# MADISON

Indiana  
Office of the Mayor

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Chairman Charbonneau and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for gathering here today to discuss a matter of utmost importance – the role of community-based integrated mental health programs critical to combating crises in our communities. My name is Bob Courtney and I am Mayor of the City of Madison. In my role as Mayor, and president of the Indiana Conference of Mayors, as well as, a member of Governor Holcomb's Public Health Commission, I can tell you first hand the importance of doing everything we can to improve the quality of life for all Hoosiers. For years we have been discussing this emerging issue. Mental health is a cornerstone of overall well-being, and as we navigate the complexities of life, it is imperative that we prioritize and invest in initiatives that support the mental health of individuals within our community.

In recent years, every corner of our state has witnessed a growing recognition of the impact of mental health on individuals, families, and societies at large. The challenges posed by crises, whether they be societal, economic, or personal, underscore the need for comprehensive mental health support. This is where community-based mental health programs come into play as a beacon of hope and healing.

First and foremost, integrated health care programs provide accessibility to essential services. By establishing the community cares initiative fund, we can bridge the gap between individuals in need and the assistance they require. This accessibility is crucial, especially during times of crisis when vulnerability is heightened, and traditional support systems may be strained.

In addition to immediate support, these programs contribute significantly to prevention efforts. By promoting mental health awareness, education, and destigmatization, communities can work together to create an environment that prioritizes well-being. This proactive approach helps in identifying and addressing mental health concerns before they escalate into crises. It has numerous benefits and the time to act is now and establish this fund so that we can continue our active planning.

Investing in such programs is not just an ethical imperative; it is a strategic decision that pays dividends in the long run. Healthy communities are resilient communities. When individuals are equipped with the tools and resources to navigate their mental health, the overall fabric of our community becomes stronger and more capable of weathering the storms that life may throw our way. Last year's SB4 took a transformative leap in investing in Hoosier's health. SB10 can be another tool for communities to make additional investment in creating impactful outcomes in an even more targeted way.

I am fortunate to represent a community that cares. Whether it is partnering with organizations like Jefferson County Suicide Prevention, Kindness Jefferson County, the Freedom Center, or our Justice Reinvestment Advisory Committee, for example, we are constantly looking for solutions.

But before I conclude my remarks, I'd like to share with you a recent initiative we launched called PASS (Police Advocacy and Support Services) in partnership with the Bethany Legacy Foundation in Madison. You see, even our first responders need care too. PASS was designed to provide free but mandatory counseling resources to our police officers which helps us achieve our community safety goals. This program was put to the test after an incident last month. On the afternoon of December 14<sup>th</sup>, our city and county volunteer fire departments and police responded to a 911 call about a structure fire with potential victims inside. As our brave men and women fought back a raging fire to gain entry, what they found would break even the strongest of fortitudes. A mother and her three children pulled from the flames, dead of an apparent murder-suicide. PASS was there for our responders but the community grief has been enormous. The need for mental health resources is real and so is the impact of not having them.

In conclusion, integrated health care and mobile crisis resources are elements of a compassionate and resilient community. As we face the challenges of today and prepare for those of tomorrow, let us commit ourselves to nurturing a community where mental health is prioritized, support is readily available, and individuals can thrive despite the storms they may face. Together, we can build a future where everyone can lead a healthy and fulfilling life. Thank you.

Bob G. Courtney  
Madison's Mayor  
City of Madison, Indiana