



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release**  
**Monday, June 3, 2024**

**MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM J. BELLO DELIVERS STATE  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADDRESS, THE FIRST OF FOUR ADDRESSES  
COMPRISING THE 2024 STATE OF THE COUNTY**

*Announcements include new mental health smartphone app, stop the stigma campaign and nature-based veteran therapy program*

**ROCHESTER, NY** — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello is delivering the 2024 State of the County address in four parts throughout the month of June. Each address will report on the state of one of the Bello Administration's four pillars of county government: Public Health; Public Safety; Economy; and Infrastructure.

Monroe County Executive Adam J. Bello today delivered the first of four State of the County briefings, the State of Public Health, delivered from Monroe Community Hospital.

*"Public Health is about more than physical well-being; it must include the holistic health of our community—that includes mental health, fighting addiction, and providing the supports people need to live full healthy lives," said County Executive Bello. "My administration is committed to providing enhanced public health resources to people where they live. I am announcing a new smartphone app to connect residents with vital mental health supports and resources and a new campaign to stop the stigma of seeking help for addiction. In addition, we have installed and restocked more than 550 naloxone boxes in public parks, facilities, and private businesses across the county and distributed 20,446 Naloxone kits from these boxes since the program began in July 2022."*

**New Office of Mental Health App**

The new Monroe County Office of Mental Health app is available on Apple and Android platforms and provides essential wellness information, crisis resources contacts, and connections to nearby support services at the tap of a button. Features include:

- Direct access to emergency crisis services;

- Community programs for behavioral health, vocational support, respite, family support, self-help, and more;
- Contacts and locations of Code Blue Shelters, warming centers and food pantries;
- Residential and housing information;
- Options for inpatient and outpatient treatment;
- Directions to Monroe County's 569 Naloxone boxes, identifying those closest to you;
- Where to receive naloxone training.

Users have access to suicide prevention information, can create a safety plan and can call or text for help directly on the app. The county will help residents install the app at various events or people can access the app on [Monroecounty.gov](http://Monroecounty.gov).

### **Investments in Healthcare workforce:**

- \$16.5 M in American Rescue Plan Act funding supports the Transformational Community Care Coordination (TC3) Program and Community Care Coordination Program. These programs are a collaboration with Monroe Community Hospital and Finger Lakes Provider System (FLPPS) and include workforce development supporting certified nursing performing assistants, home health aides, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses. A Long Term Care Workforce Program will train 232 individuals, and a nursing pathways initiative will train and certify up to 630 individuals;
- COMIDA's workforce development fund invests \$1.5 M in the mPower Program through MCC to upskill and reskill county residents and connect them to the healthcare workforce;
- COMIDA's workforce development fund invests \$300,000 with 1199 SEIU Hospital and Healthcare Workers, providing training, stipends, and support to 60 individuals to be trained and placed as certified nursing assistants, patient care techs, phlebotomy techs, and pharmacy techs;
- COMIDA's workforce development fund invests \$200,000 with Rochester Works for a recovery services program that offers training in health care related fields to people struggling with substance use disorder;
- Monroe Community Hospital has successfully launched its Certified Nursing Assistant program, now in its third cohort.

### **VSA Clinical Based Eco-Therapy Program:**

Monroe County's Veterans Service Agency (VSA) launched the first municipally run clinical nature based therapy program in the country. After piloting a nature based clinical therapy program for our veterans, the county decided to offer these services directly. Working with a clinical psychologist, Monroe County VSA developed a new program and hired clinical staff to operate the program in house.

Backed by evidence, the initial results of this the nature-based therapy program revealed a 70% decrease in acute PTSD symptoms. Any active duty service member or veteran in Monroe County is eligible to participate in this life-changing program.

### **Continued Fight Against the Opioid Epidemic**

- To date, Monroe County has installed more than 550 naloxone boxes countywide. A comprehensive map of publically available naloxone can be found at [Monroe County, NY - Naloxone Box Map](#);
- Since the program launched in July 2022, 20,446 naloxone kits have been distributed from naloxone boxes;
- Naloxone Boxes are located in all county parks, and are placed in partnership with some municipal recreation centers, libraries, houses of worship, barbershops, salons, non-profit agencies, bars, restaurants, and other businesses.

### **Stop the Stigma Campaign**

Naloxone can save lives and give those suffering from substance abuse disorder another chance to seek treatment. The stigma of substance abuse is a major barrier to seeking treatment. Using opioid settlement money won by New York State Attorney General Letitia James, the county will fund a “Stop the Stigma” campaign.

The goal of the Stop the Stigma Campaign is to end the stigma surrounding addiction, so that individuals and their support networks feel comfortable seeking help. The campaign, slated to kick off later this year, will feature videos, TV, radio, digital ads, billboards, bus tails and social media on a variety of platforms. We see spikes in the call volume to our 24-hour opioid hotline after media appearances from our IMPACT team. A coordinated campaign will connect more people to the resources they need to get help. Monroe County’s 24-hour opioid hotline is 585-753-5300.

### **Housing**

Housing is essential to public health, and Monroe County is committed to making investments in the emergency housing, affordable housing, and construction of new housing units. Actions include:

- In partnership with Volunteers of America, Monroe County will open the Moving Forward Family Shelter. The first county owned-emergency housing facility that will provide wraparound services to stabilize our families and connect them with permanent affordable housing options;

- Investing in a landlord/tenant mediation by training and certifying mediators who will work with up to 250 landlords and tenants seeking to resolve conflicts and keep people in housing;
- Investing in a search navigator and after-care program that will connect up to 720 low and moderate income clients with quality affordable housing;
- Investing in a landlord incentive program to make more rentals available with a potential to bring on as many as 1,500 additional units;
- In partnership with New York State, the county hosted a roundtable with housing stakeholders, elected officials, New York State agencies, developers and landlords to discuss the role they can play in creating more affordable housing.

### **Age-Friendly Communities**

Monroe County is experiencing a historic demographic shift. Currently, county residents 60 years or older make up 25% of the population – a number projected to reach 215,000 by 2030.

The Monroe County Aging Alliance developed the *Creating a Community for a Lifetime: An Action Plan for an Age-friendly/Livable Rochester and Monroe County* – and progress is well underway. Last month Monroe County was proud to receive an Age-Friendly Community designation from AARP. The age-friendly report and action plan are available online at: <https://monroeagingalliance.org/our-work/age-friendly-initiative/>

Monroe County departments are operating through an age-friendly lens and making impacts that benefit our entire community. Since the implementation of the action plan:

- Monroe Community Hospital received Age Friendly designations from the John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and designated as an Age-Friendly Employer;
- Monroe County Department of Planning & Development created a County-wide Active Transportation Plan that incorporates age-friendly recommendations;
- Monroe County Department of Transportation implemented safe streets projects and has improved snow and ice removal efforts;
- Monroe County Parks Department continues to enhance accessibility, with projects across our parks system including: a wheelchair-accessible beach mat at Ontario Beach Park, paved golf cart paths at all county golf courses, and new pickle ball courts.

Age-friendly initiatives improves the lives of people of all ages, make our community more accessible for everyone.

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