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What are your thoughts on the current landscape of the mental health and wellbeing ecosystem?

I am really glad to see so much attention and investment from healthcare and thought leaders and policymakers on ways to improve MH/SUD treatment and services. While there is much more to be done to support people and increase opportunities for inclusion and access across the lifespan – by working together to increase acceptance there becomes a better understanding that the experience of mental health conditions is a typical part of who we are.

Focusing on developing school-based mental health services and the integration of mental health and substance use screening, assessment, and brief interventions in primary care settings are all examples of approaches that provide holistic care and increase access. The recent launch of 988 was another sign that policymakers are recognizing that systemic changes are needed to continue to improve the MH/SUD access points and treatment options.

What is the biggest challenge currently facing the space, and how do we overcome it?

One of the biggest challenges the industry is experiencing is the workforce crisis. At Elevance Health, we are working to increase the pipeline of MH/SUD practitioners and peers, as well as improving access to broadband and technology and utilizing technology such as telepsychiatry and tele-psychotherapy services as a way to reduce barriers to access to care and services.

What are the main opportunities for transformation?



In addressing MH/SUD it is important to recognize the chronic nature of some conditions and develop services that support people throughout their health and wellbeing journey. Integration and co-locating of physical and mental health providers improves the delivery of holistically supportive services.

Reflecting the needs of diverse individuals requires a continued focus on building and sustaining a more diverse, inclusive, and culturally humble mental health workforce.

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't include the need to address social drivers of health and the impacts of housing, nutrition, employment, and other health-related social needs to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

What is Elevance Health's vision for the future of mental health?

Elevance Health is expanding our telehealth offerings; providing text/chat services as the national backup to 988; partnering with organizations to continue to provide MH/SUD curriculums and services in schools to

support young people; increasing our scholarship commitments to rural colleges, HBCUs and HSIs to create more opportunity for people to pursue education and careers in MH/SUD, and strategic partnerships to facilitate access to online clinical supervision for aspiring clinicians.

Is multi-stakeholder collaboration key in advancing this space?

Absolutely! We actively seek opportunities to partner with organizations like MHA and NAMI, among others. We host advisory board meetings and, town halls, one-on-one meetings, and virtual sessions to stay engaged with and learn from people with lived experience. A diverse and expansive multi-stakeholder engagement provides opportunity to share information about MH and SUD and ensure people with lived and personal experience have to participate in the innovative solutions to create and sustain an accessible, equitable, and inclusive mental health ecosystem. In addition, we are working with the Kennedy-Satcher Center for Mental Health Equity on creating tenets for states to imbue equity into our crisis systems.