

In 2019, let's tackle mental health anew



Your Turn

Keith Crnic and Mike Meyer
Guest columnists

Welcome to the Age of Anxiety. Come on in, take your coat off and try to get comfortable. Good luck, though. Anxiety does not want you to be comfortable.

We see his clammy fingerprints smudged across our culture; rates of depression, suicide and addiction are skyrocketing, and it seems every day there has been some new horrific act of violence. These problems are not new by any stretch, but it seems that they have reached a fever pitch.

The effects are everywhere around us, and the culprit is mental illness.

Perhaps it's the constant news cycle or the inundation of social media.

From wherever this magnification of mental illness arose, it has put the well-being of our entire society at stake, and

it can no longer be ignored.

This year, all who want to see a healthier, brighter future for themselves and for their loved ones can no longer sit idly by and hope a solution arrives. It's time for action, for finding innovative solutions that can be implemented at scale in order to shift our collective approach to what it means to be happy and healthy.

That shift begins in the world of research. At the Institute for Mental Health Research (IMHR), our goal is to provide Arizona's wealth of brilliant researchers with the tools and seed funding they need to find those solutions.

But unlike other organizations that focus on treatments for those people already caught in mental illness' sticky web, IMHR takes a different tack.

We believe that prevention trumps intervention, that stopping these problems before they take hold is not only more effective and more cost-efficient but more impactful on the lives of the afflicted.

A cast on a broken arm is important, but it would be much nicer to not have

broken that arm in the first place.

Last year, Arizona spent over \$2 billion on intervention treatments to support citizens with behavioral health issues. Unfortunately, many of these intervention programs operate on clinical pathways that are more than a decade out of date.

The disconnect between state-of-the-art treatments and what actually occurs is leaving many of those receiving treatment only marginally better than where they began and with millions of dollars wasted.

It is imperative that we establish evidence-based systems that support mental health.

By funding research that studies the process by which these mental health problems emerge, we can more effectively mitigate and prevent them from occurring in the first place. The work is not always glamorous, nor is it easy, but it absolutely must be done, now more than ever.

To catalyze these changes, we need your help.

IMHR has nearly 20 years of experi-

ence in funding Arizona's most promising researchers in their mission to solve society's most pressing mental-health concerns.

And if you feel as we do, that the time is now, then please lend us your support as we work to find sustainable and effective prevention models that will foster healthier communities.

Reach out to your representatives and express your concerns, participate in our various committees and programs or consider donating to our research fund.

Your dollars can quite literally change the world. Let us remember 2019 as the year we shifted the tides for good.

To learn more about IMHR and how you can help, visit us at imhr.org.

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