2023 Impact Report
About

Co-founded by former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy and his wife, Amy L. Kennedy, The Kennedy Forum (TKF) is creating a future where all people can access effective prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUD).

TKF uniquely cultivates relationships with key leaders to advance sweeping change for major MH/SUD issues, including inequity in insurance coverage and the escalating youth mental health crisis.

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On the over: Twelve U.S. governors and their spouses joined our Co-Founders, Amy and Patrick Kennedy, at their home in New Jersey as part of Amy’s work with the National Governors Association.
TKF Co-Founder Patrick J. Kennedy and First Partner of California Jennifer Siebel Newsom await their cue to throw out the first pitch at Oracle Park during the San Francisco Giants’ Mental Health Awareness Night, May 9, 2023.
We founded The Kennedy Forum out of the desire to serve others — a value that our family holds dear — and it also felt like answering a call. The pernicious effects of mental health conditions and substance use disorders were infiltrating our schools, homes, workplaces, and lives. The decline in our collective well-being felt palpable, but not inevitable.

We knew that there were great minds and strong wills working toward solutions. Yet the road to a better future was long, and it was being constructed in siloes and pieces toward a blurry horizon.

A clearer future and a better path would require a coordinated, sustained commitment from those ready to go the distance. As the African proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Through The Kennedy Forum, committed public and private allies have found a place to coalesce behind a common advocacy to ensure mental health as essential health. We’ve also turned this collective power into action for the long term.

In 2023, The Kennedy Forum announced Alignment for Progress, a partner-powered coalition to create seismic, systemic change. More than 130+ organizations have now signed on to work for a bold vision: By 2033, 90% of the population is screened for MH/SUD, 90% who need it receive quality treatment, and 90% manage symptoms and achieve recovery.

You are a part of a rare movement that has the momentum, shared purpose, and endurance to carry wholesale change from start to finish. There is farther to go, but we will go together.

With sincere thanks,

Patrick J. Kennedy
Co-founder, The Kennedy Forum
Former U.S. Representative (D-RI)

Amy L. Kennedy
Co-Founder
The Kennedy Forum
My family, like so many others, has been personally affected by mental health conditions and substance use disorders (MH/SUDs). I know how difficult it is to see someone you love hurting, scared, or fighting for their life, especially while trying to find or pay for quality treatment. Sadly, these problems are widespread.

In 2022, deaths from suicide were the highest ever recorded. Nearly 1 in 3 Americans had MH/SUD in 2023. Almost 4 in 10 young people reported feeling hopeless. And 90% of Americans believe that there is a mental health crisis.

We are approaching a watershed moment where we can reverse these outcomes if we double down on effective work that’s already shown promise.

The Kennedy Forum has a special role in this future. The organization has spent years building the partners, policies, and pathways to address the MH/SUD crisis at a systems level, through a public health approach to change. When we announced Alignment for Progress and the 90-90-90 goals, it reflected a decade of coalition building and policymaking. Since then, almost 85 organizations have signed on as Commitment Makers to do their part.

As you’ll read in the pages of this report, the momentum is gathering. You’ll see how we work to convene powerful thought leaders, influence legislation, galvanize partners, impact national approaches, and create actionable roadmaps to affect care at every level.

Now is the time to accelerate these successful approaches with a continued commitment to a better future. Thank you for helping us get there.

Sincerely,

Rebecca O. Bagley
President & CEO
The Kennedy Forum
It was a year of successes and celebrations for The Kennedy Forum. The organization celebrated its tenth anniversary, and launched a movement to change the face of mental health and substance use care in the United States, Alignment for Progress.

We convened more than 350 leaders in Boston, MA to launch a movement powered by a public health approach and had meaningful discussions around the biggest roadblocks the community faces. Most importantly, we set forth bold goals alongside committed partners: By 2033, 90% of the population is screened for MH/SUD, 90% who need it receive quality treatment, and 90% manage symptoms and achieve recovery. To advance the 90-90-90 goals, TFK launched Alignment for Progress, a coordinated movement targeting key MH/SU policies and issues, including accessible care, a skilled workforce, and early intervention.

In addition to the announcement of the Alignment for Progress movement, in 2023:

- We created a National Strategy of curated, searchable, and interconnected recommendations that are making headway in federal legislation.
- We identified the need to prioritize and address stubborn systemic problems, like tracking data on MH/SUDs nationwide and creating a sustainable workforce.
- We partnered with McKinsey Health Institute and KPMG to get real data on MH/SUD: a systems mapping tool and a zip-code level data mapping tool.
- We’ve identified California, Illinois, and New Jersey as innovator states: “laboratories” where we will focus our efforts to lead the way for nationwide change.
- We drafted and led comments along with 26 other advocacy groups that answered the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) request for comments assessing compliance with parity in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program.
- We led a coordinated response of dozens of groups to submit comments in favor of strong final parity rules; 87% of the nearly 9,000 submitted comments followed our model.
- We advised Governor Phil Murphy on his Chair’s Initiative for the National Governors Association, resulting in its youth mental health playbook, which included advocating for many specific policies included in the playbook.

Read on to learn more about the year and our progress, and thank you for your support of The Kennedy Forum.
The Kennedy Forum

2023 Milestones

TKF turned 10 in 2023!
Watch our anniversary video.

87% of the nearly 9,000 comments submitted during the Parity rulemaking public comment period used our model language

Alignment for Progress Movement
A partner-powered coalition that seeks to fundamentally reshape how mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUD) are prevented, treated, and supported.

National Strategy
A set of policy recommendations designed to be used to guide the Alignment for Progress movement.

KPMG Zip Code Data Map
A digital tool that uses aggregated claims data to show service availability and use down to the zip code — and state district — level.

MHI Systems Mapping Tool
A digital tool depicting the current mental health and substance use care ecosystem to be used as a resource to guide cross-sector approaches to change.

Did you know?

- **22 states** use some or all of our Jim Ramstad Model State Parity Legislation to ensure insurance parity and enforcement.
- **35+ letters, formal comments, and policy actions** including 17 letters that TKF led, received our support and endorsement.
- **85 organizations** have joined Alignment for Progress in 2023 by making a commitment, and our goal for 2024 is to double that number!
POLICY WINS & IMPACT

We work to change federal and state policies that impact MH/SUD by crafting model legislation (e.g., the Ramstad model), developing issue briefs, organizing coalitions on critical topics, convening organizations to educate policymakers and discuss improvements to systems and legislation, and amplifying our efforts through strategic communications to engage current and potential partners in our work.

Championing Insurance Coverage & Parity

Driving Equitable Access

Advancing Crisis Response Systems

Ensuring Youth Thrive
Championing Insurance Coverage & Parity

TKF advocates for effective implementation, increased enforcement, and extension to Medicare and Medicaid of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, along with passage of state-level legislation to ensure all Americans have access to affordable, quality health care:

- TKF successfully worked to close the “opt-out” loophole that allowed state and local government employee plans to avoid complying with mental health/substance use disorder (MH/SUD) parity laws, protecting over one million public employees and their family members from wrongful coverage denials.
- TKF extended Medicaid in New Jersey schools, ensuring much-needed services are covered for those who need them.

A milestone day for parity. In July, They Kennedy Forum, and our Co-Founders, Patrick and Amy (and their children) participated in an important day at the White House: The Biden-Harris administration announced new rulemaking to strengthen the enforcement of the Ferderal Parity Act.

Left to right: Co-founder Patrick J. Kennedy joins Tom Coderre, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of SAMHSA; Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use of SAMHSA; President Joe Biden; Lisa Gomez, Assistant Secretary for Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA), U.S. Department of Labor; Julie A. Su, Acting Secretary of Labor.
After the U.S. Department of Labor released a proposed rule in 2023 to implement the parity law, TKF engaged the Biden-Harris Administration to shape a proposed final rule that would more efficiently implement parity; TKF led a group of five organizations that provided a framework for comments. Of the approximately 9,000 comments submitted, 87% used TKF’s template language.

We were fortunate to have many important voices engaged with us in 2023. Here, three such individuals appear at the Alignment for Progress event.

Thomas Insel, M.D., psychiatrist and neuroscientist, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and author of Healing: Our Path from Mental Illness to Mental Health, received special recognition from The Kennedy Forum at the event.

Gary Gottlieb, M.D., MBA, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, a member of the National Academy of Medicine, former CEO of Partners In Health, and of Partners HealthCare (now MassGeneral Brigham) launches the 90-90-90 goals at the event.

Kana Enomoto, Partner at McKinsey Health Institute and former acting administrator of SAMHSA, spoke about the MHI System Mapping tool, developed as part of a pro-bono partnership between MHI and The Kennedy Forum.
TKF seeks to ensure that all Americans in need of MH/SUD care have access to the most effective treatment services available:

- TKF worked with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to create two new Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes for coordinated service care (CSC) in Medicare's fee schedule, which had lacked them, to fully allow for reimbursement of the entire CSC model for recovery services, such as patient education and employment supports, as well as to promote consistent coverage in commercial insurance.

- TKF led diverse partners to secure historic increases in investments in MH/SUD care during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the FY 2024 President’s Budget provides $10.8 billion for the Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an increase of $3.3 billion above FY 2023 enacted.

- TKF formed a group of 62 organizations to successfully advocate for the elimination of the X-waiver that had been required by law to prescribe buprenorphine (one of three FDA-approved medications for treatment of opioid use disorder) and which impeded clinicians’ ability to provide this treatment.

- TKF organized 67 organizations to urge the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to reconsider a rule that would sharply curtail telehealth for people with SUDs, causing the DEA to postpone the rule.

Advancing Crisis Response

Years of groundwork and movement building by TKF, including sponsoring one of the nation’s first 988 bills, one of the only bills to include explicit coverage for crisis services, brought the nationwide 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline launch in July 2022, giving people in crisis and easy-to-remember number that connects them with help.

Implementation began in 2023, and once fully implemented, call centers will connect people calling mobile crisis support teams — staffed by mental health professionals and trained peers. Critical to the transformation is reducing the role of law enforcement in crisis response. A recent study found that at least 1 in 4 fatal law enforcement encounters involve an individual with serious mental illness.

- TKF led a broad coalition to enact groundbreaking 988 implementation bills in California, which included commercial insurance coverage for emergency services. Other states have since followed suit.
- TKF issued a detailed 988 policy brief which includes model MH/SUD crisis coverage requirements.

At least 1 in 4 fatal law enforcement encounters involve someone with serious mental illness.

In December, Co-Founder Patrick J. Kennedy appeared on Meet the Press with (L to R): Victoria Garrick Browne, TEDxTalk speaker, mental health advocate, podcast host, and former Division I Athlete; and Shairi R. Turner M.D., M.P.H., an internist and pediatrician with expertise in trauma-informed practices, who currently serves as Chief Health Officer for Crisis Text Line.
Ensuring Youth Thrive

With the growing crisis in youth mental health, exposed and exacerbated by COVID, it is incumbent on the health, education, and policy ecosystems to collaborate and drive solutions to reform policy, improve reach, amplify the message, and bring sustainability to the movement. To this end, TKF:

- Launched a multi-year School-Based Mental Health Industry Council to create solutions to increase access to school-based and school-linked care focused on eight pillars: Scaling Mental Health Access for Youth and Families; School-Community Partnerships; Defining a Best Practice Standard for School-Based Mental Health; Early Identification and Intervention; Educating the Educators; Sustainability and Funding; Addressing the School-Based Mental Health Care Labor Shortage; and Employer Engagement.

- Advanced the landmark California law which resulted in mandated coverage of Coordinated Specialty Care, a proven treatment for early psychosis that has been endorsed by CMS, SAMHSA, and NIMH to address gaps such as over 70% of young people needing these services not receiving them and few commercial insurers covering them.

- Partnered with the National Governors Association (NGA), the American Psychological Association, Inseparable, and Mental Health America to develop an ambitious advocacy plan to address the prevention and intervention gaps in meeting the mental health needs of our nation’s youth. Our collaborative efforts influenced the NGA’s Youth Mental Health Initiative for 2022-2023, and led to many of our recommendations being reflected in Strengthening Youth Mental Health: A Governor’s Playbook.
The Alignment for Progress

What we need is a return of the sort of big picture thinking JFK relied on when he signed the Community Mental Health Act, not to mention when he dreamed of putting a man on the moon. And we need to work together. Instead of being siloed by thinking that our own particular issue has a certain set of needs, we need to recognize that we’re all going to be advanced by working towards the same set of principles.”

– Former Congressman and Co-Founder Patrick J. Kennedy

Alignment for Progress is a partner-powered coalition that seeks to fundamentally reshape how mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUDs) are prevented, treated, and supported. The Kennedy Forum sparked the movement by calling for committed partners to back a bold vision together: By 2033, 90% of the population is screened for MH/SUD, 90% who need it receive quality treatment, and 90% manage symptoms and achieve recovery.

More than 85 Commitment Makers answered the call in 2023 to reach the 90-90-90 goals, addressing barriers like health insurance coverage, workforce shortages, insufficient data, and more. These leaders work to find solutions, discover possibilities — and ultimately save lives.

Left: Governor Tim Walz (D-MN), Seth Cohen, Chief Impact Officer of Forbes and the founder of Forbes Impact Lab, and our Co-Founder, Patrick J. Kennedy, share a laugh onstage at the Alignment for Progress. Watch the session on the states’ role in mental health.
Above: The CEOs of many of the major mental health organizations take the stage representing the CEO Alliance for Mental Health at The Kennedy Forum’s Alignment for Progress event in October, 2023.

Pictured L to R: BACK ROW: Daniel H. Gillison, Jr., National Association for Mental Illness; Schroeder Stribling, MSW, Mental Health America; Charles Ingoglia, MSW, National Council for Mental Wellbeing; Robert Gebbia, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; Rick Kellar, MBA, Peg’s Foundation; Arthur C. Evans, Jr., Ph.D. American Psychological Association.

FRONT ROW: Rebecca O. Bagley, The Kennedy Forum; Lisa Dailey, J.D., Treatment Advocacy Center; Brandon Staglin, One Mind; Danna Mauch, Ph.D., Massachusetts Association for Mental Health; Shawn Coughlin, National Association for Behavioral Healthcare.

The movement is empowered by tools and curated thought leadership gatherings driven by The Kennedy Forum, but collective action will be key. Three tools were launched in Boston: The Alignment for Progress National Strategy (see page 19), the KPMG Zip-Code Mapping Tool, and the McKinsey Health Institute’s Systems Mapping Tool. The work of KPMG and McKinsey Health Institute were done as pro-bono partnerships, and we are grateful for their support. The development of a fourth tool was also announced: the Mental Health Parity Index, in partnership with Third Horizon.

Curated thought leadership is foundational to the Alignment for Progress movement, and over the course of the year, The Kennedy Forum convened clinical and industry experts, including The McKinsey Health Institute, to develop the 90-90-90 goals that serve as the basis for the Alignment for Progress movement (see page 21 for more about these convenings).
Looking ahead to 2024, we will convene special committees related to systemic obstacles that must be overcome to accelerate progress towards these goals. One such committee is the MH/SUD Workforce Committee, which will explore barriers and opportunities related to the quantity, quality, and distribution of the workforce. This committee will be chaired by Erin Parks, Co-Founder and CCO of Equip Health, and Stuart Archer, CEO of Oceans Healthcare.

The second committee, the MH/SUD Data Committee, will look at the structural barriers to collecting and measuring the data needed to evaluate progress towards achieving 90/90/90 by 2033. This committee will be chaired by Caroline Carney, M.D., M.Sc., FAPA, CPHQ, President and CMO of Magellan Behavioral Health, and Nawal Roy, MS, Founder and CEO of Holmusk. The Data Committee will also explore the need for a subcommittee of provider experts (including society representation of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, addiction specialists, peers, and CCBHCs) to create, construct, and harmonize key BH clinical measures and outcomes across all major BH disease categories.

The membership of both committees will be composed of behavioral health clinical, technical, policy, academic and analytics leaders across the payor, provider, EHR, digital health, academic, and government sectors to advise the development of the 90-90-90 goal measurement topics with the goal of creating a tracking dashboard and action plan.

We look forward to sharing the work of these committees in 2024.
Everyone has a role to play

Systems level change requires a virtuous cycle of both institutional and individual stakeholder action.

Governments consider how to use resources to positively affect drivers of mental health while developing strategies to improve health literacy.

Private sector organizations realize they are in the business of mental health — that most products and services they offer could affect the drivers of mental health.

Employers recognize the impact of workplace experiences on employee mental health and adapt to improve the working environment.

The health sector embraces the need to modernize and adapt — to innovate and improve.

The philanthropic sector invests in research and new solutions, convenes stakeholders, and drives advocacy to influence change.

Left: In May, President & CEO Rebecca O. Bagley joined NASDAQ, Headspace, and Sesame Workshop for the ringing of the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange in observance of Mental Health Awareness Month. None other than Elmo did the honor of ringing the bell.

Right: Stuart Archer, FACHE, CEO of Oceans Healthcare, leads a discussion about collaborating for progress on parity with care providers and payers, including (L to R): Margaret-Mary Wilson, M.D., MBA, MRCP, FNMCP, Chief Medical Officer and Executive Vice President, UnitedHealth Group; Harsh Trivedi M.D., MBA, President and CEO, Sheppard Pratt; Tracy Watts, Senior Partner, National Leader for U.S. Healthcare Policy, Mercer; and Marti Taylor, R.N., MSN, former President and CEO, OneFifteen. View video of their discussion.
The Kennedy Forum’s strategic initiative, Alignment for Progress, sets forth a 10-year 90-90-90 goal by 2033:

- 90% of individuals screened for MH/SUDs
- 90% of those who need it receive evidence-based treatment
- 90% manage symptoms and achieving recovery

We will achieve our vision by aligning a movement that ensures parity in resources, access, quality, and outcomes.
Alignment for Progress

National Strategy

The National Strategy, launched at the Alignment for Progress event in October, includes a set of policy recommendations designed to be used by federal policymakers and national advocates who are championing solutions for mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUDs).

The Strategy provides actionable improvements to steer Alignment for Progress, a movement that seeks to fundamentally reshape how MH/SUDs are prevented, treated, and supported. A compelling feature of the Strategy is its searchability: by population addressed, by congressional committee with budget authority, by focus area, or by social determinant of health. This assists those engaged in the movement address the intersection of the recommendations so solutions can be developed to address these cross-cutting issues.

The recommendations have been carefully vetted by numerous organizations, experts, leaders, and partners to identify the greatest opportunities to create systemic change. We envisioned this searchable database as a living tool for those seeking guidance on insurance coverage, enforcement of parity, and improvements to our systems of care. Learn more here.
Alignment for Progress

Commitment Project

In seeking to transform care for mental health and substance use disorders, we recognized that such a broad systems change could only be achieved by public and private partners working together with a public health focus.

To make this change possible, TKF recruits organizations across all industries who are willing to own and advance a distinct objective that positively affects MH/SUD prevention, treatment, or care.

In 2023, more than 85 Commitment Makers have claimed their place in a movement to reach bigger goals together than any single organization could alone.

SEE ALL COMMITMENT MAKERS

Representatives of nearly 30 of the more than 85 commitment-making organizations joined us at Alignment for Progress, taking the stage to share their commitments with the audience.
Thought Leader Convenings

In our role as a preeminent convener of voices and thought leaders across the MH/SUD space, TKF invited leaders of provider systems, payers, and electronic health record (EHR) companies to curated meetings at the Kennedy Compound on Cape Cod.

As part of a pro-bono partnership with McKinsey Health Institute (MHI), the sessions were facilitated by MHI experts; several key themes were identified from each session. These themes became important foundational thinking for the MHI/TKF Systems Mapping Tool, TKF’s National Strategy and the Alignment for Progress movement goals of 90-90-90 by 2033.

Chief Medical Officers

Kyu Rhee, M.D., MPP
CEO
National Association of Community Health Centers
(host)

Andrew B. Bindman, M.D.
Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer
Kaiser Permanente

Jay Butterman, D.O.
SVP, Behavioral Health Chief Medical Officer
Centene Corporation

Caroline Carney, M.D.
President of Behavioral Health and Chief Medical Officer, Magellan Health

Jason Dees, DO, FAAFP
Executive Vice President, Marketplace & Chief Medical Officer
Molina Healthcare

Richard Park, M.D.
Co-founder and Managing Partner
Ascend Partners

Taft Parsons III, M.D.
VP & Chief Psychiatric Officer
Aetna / CVS Health

Sandrine Pirard, M.D., Ph.D, MPH
West Region Chief Medical Officer
Carelon Behavioral Health (Elevance)

Brian W. Powers, M.D., MBA
Vice President of Clinical Strategy
Humana

Margaret-Mary Wilson M.D., MBA, MRCP, FNMCP
Chief Medical Officer and Executive Vice President
UnitedHealth Group

Rodgers Wilson M.D., MFA,DFAPA
National Medical Executive- Behavioral Health
Cigna Healthcare

Special Guests

Elizabeth Wroe
Principal
Leavitt Partners

Christopher Kennedy McKelvy
Founder & Managing Partner
K. Ventures
Electronic Health Record Leaders

Richard Park, M.D.
Co-founder and Managing Partner
Ascend Partners

Prerana Laddha
Product Lead
Epic Systems Corporation

Marjorie Morrison
Founder
PsychHub

Special Guests

Elizabeth Wroe
Principal
Leavitt Partners

Liz Brown
Philanthropist

Christopher Kennedy McKelvy
Founder & Managing Partner
K. Ventures

Behavioral Health Leaders

Stuart Archer, FACHE
CEO
Oceans Healthcare

Andrew Lynch, Ph.D.
Chief Strategy Officer
Acadia Health Care

Harsh K. Trivedi, M.D., MBA
President & Chief Executive Officer
Sheppard Pratt

Brent Turner
CEO
Summit Behavioral Healthcare

Matt Peterson
Executive Vice President and
President, Behavioral Health Division
Universal Health Services
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Alignment for Progress Steering Committee 2023

Peter O’Brien, President and CEO, MADO Management
Tim Gillis, J.D., Office Managing Partner of the Washington Metro Area, KPMG
Arthur Evans, Jr., Ph.D., CEO and Executive Vice President, American Psychological Association
Bill Meaney, MBA, President and CEO, Iron Mountain
Kent Dauten, MBA, Chairman & Co-Founder, Keystone Capital
Linda Rosenberg, MSW, Executive Director for External Relations, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry
Pam Baer, Community Leader & Philanthropist in San Francisco

School-Based Industry Council

Brightline (Co-Chair)
Effective School Solutions (Co-Chair)
eLuma Therapy
Empower U
FullBloom
Hazel Health
Headspace
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About

Co-founded by former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy and his wife, Amy L. Kennedy, The Kennedy Forum (TKF) is creating a future where all people can access effective prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUD).

TKF uniquely cultivates relationships with key leaders to advance sweeping change for major MH/SUD issues, including inequity in insurance coverage and the escalating youth mental health crisis.