

# CITY OF PEABODY

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## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR EDWARD A. BETTENCOURT, JR.

### FREE MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE AVAILABLE TO PEABODY RESIDENTS

Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt, Jr. is pleased to announce the availability of a new resource to connect Peabody residents with access to outpatient mental health care providers. The INTERFACE Referral Service is a free and confidential helpline operated by William James College and provides referral services across 58 communities within Massachusetts. Peabody residents can access the Helpline by calling 1-888-244-6843 Monday through Friday between the hours of 9 AM and 5 PM.

The Helpline assists callers by gathering information about their or their child's mental health concern and uses a database of over 9000 licensed providers to connect the caller to outpatient mental health professionals that best match their needs based on location, specialty, insurance or fee structure, and appointment availability. Helpline counselors follow up with callers to ensure that the caller was able to make a successful match with a provider and will continue to provide support and referrals until a successful match has been made. Evaluation of the program has demonstrated that INTERFACE has been an important tool for individuals looking for help in addressing mental health concerns. In a survey of users of the service, 97% of respondents reported that INTERFACE counselors were knowledgeable about available mental health services. The average time between initial contact and receipt of a referral option for those who called the Helpline is 14 days; this short time frame has resulted in a much lower disengagement rate, meaning that more people found it easier to get to the care they need.

The community health needs assessment conducted by Lahey Medical Center in 2019 (<https://www.lahey.org/lhmc/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/LHMC-FINAL-CHNA-PDF.pdf>) identifies several key health themes across its service area. "Mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety/stress, access to treatment, stigma) underlie many health and social concerns." The assessment revealed higher-than-state average rates of depression and anxiety among older adults (65+) in Peabody, as well as higher rates for mental health disorder inpatient hospitalizations and mental health mortality. The report states that similar concerns exist for the impact of depression, anxiety, and substance use within the youth population.

"The health and well-being of Peabody residents is a priority we all share," said Mayor Bettencourt. "The INTERFACE helpline will remove many of the barriers that people come across when trying to find outpatient mental health services for themselves or a dependent, and we are grateful for the community partnerships that have allowed us to bring this resource to Peabody."

In addition to funding from the City of Peabody, this project is funded through the J.B. Thomas – Lahey Foundation and the Peabody City Council Subcommittee on Drug Education and Awareness.

For more information on INTERFACE, visit [www.peabody-ma.gov](http://www.peabody-ma.gov) or contact the Peabody Health Department at 978-538-5926.

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