



Global, community leaders launch 'Mental Health Now' (mhNOW) innovation partnership to help meet fast growing need

Worldwide depression / anxiety up 50% since 1990; Initiative launches at 1st Financing and Innovation in Global Health (FIGH) conference Washington DC

WASHINGTON , DC, USA, April 14, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- WASHINGTON, D.C. – April 14,

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We have the opportunity to fundamentally transform the story of mental health around the world

Moitreyee Sinha, Global Development Incubator

2016 – Today, the Mental Health Now, or mhNOW, initiative will launch at the inaugural Financing and Innovation in Global Health ([FIGH](#)) conference. Led by mental health experts Chris Underhill, founder and president of [BasicNeeds](#), and Moitreyee Sinha, head of health at the [Global Development Incubator](#) (GDI), mhNOW is a global, collective action including social entrepreneurs, organizations and companies that are working together to innovate and identify mental health solutions on a global scale, and systemically implement in communities at a local level. In doing so, mhNOW is

delivering on its mission to increase economic stability by improving mental – and total – health around the world.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), mental illness is increasing worldwide. Between 1990 and 2013, the number of people suffering from depression and/or anxiety increased by nearly 50%, from 416 million to 615 million. The mhNOW initiative aims to do more than just treat mental illness. The initiative will effectively address mental health in a way that encourages total health and supports the whole person, their families and their community. Beyond the community level, better health equates with more years of productivity, and greater productivity over a long period can lead to growth for economies. In doing so, this initiative has the potential to save the global economy trillions of dollars every year.

“We are excited to launch the mhNOW initiative because the time is now to spark a mental health revolution,” said Chris Underhill, founder and president of BasicNeeds. “Our goal is to create and employ tools on a global level that can be adopted and replicated by local city leaders so that they are able to bring best practices in mental health to their own communities. Many of these resources and solutions exist, and mhNOW is helping unify a fractured system to create a movement that will bring proven mental health solutions to those most in need.”

Together, with a growing list of global mental health thought leaders and founding partners – GDI, Johnson & Johnson, Grand Challenges Canada (funded by the Government of Canada), BasicNeeds, StrongMinds – mhNOW will use technology, entrepreneurial zeal and civic engagement to bring together leaders from public and private sectors that can challenge, disrupt and create new ways to fund treatment and improve development skills in communities around the world.

“We have the opportunity to fundamentally transform the story of mental health around the world and

create a culture that will support the ‘whole’ person,” said Moitreyee Sinha, head of health at the Global Development Incubator. “Effectively addressing mental health is about more than just treating mental illness – it’s about realizing the intricate link between our bodies and our minds, and driving solutions that promote total health for all. Investing in mental health isn’t only the right thing to do, it’s also the smart thing to do.”

The launch of mhNOW follows the World Bank and WHO’s co-hosted meeting, Out of the Shadows: Making Mental Health a Global Development Priority, where the two organizations encouraged international leaders to bring mental health to the forefront of the global health agenda and invest in cost-effective, affordable and feasible interventions. Mental health was also recently added to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to transform the world by 2030.

Implementing mental health solutions at scale by 2030 has the potential to save \$6 trillion and increase the ability of citizens to lead more positive and economically productive lives. The mhNOW initiative urges donors, private sector, NGOs and civil society to invest in and commit to mental health, and join the growing list of founding partners to optimize resources and leverage assets to improve total health for all.

A livestream of the mhNOW announcement will be broadcast on Thursday, April 14 at 3:45 p.m. EDT at www.globalhealthforum.com/live.

About the Global Development Incubator

The Global Development Incubator (GDI) launches start-ups focused on social impact, incubates partnerships to spark collective change, and lays the foundations for promising organizations to reach their potential. We take a hands-on approach and partner with innovators over 2-3 years to design structured pathways proven to transform ideas into lasting change. We have a track record of taking on complex issues with many moving parts and always prioritize the collective vision to move the needle on important issues. Learn more at www.globaldevincubator.org.

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