



## **Statement from the Eating Disorders Coalition:**

### **Office of Women's Health to Provide \$3.715 Million to Eating Disorders Initiative**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 9, 2022)- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced a \$3.715 million Eating Disorders Initiative under the Office of Women's Health (OWH) to support grants designed to identify, develop, and implement evidence-based strategies and community-based interventions aimed at detecting and preventing eating disorders, focusing on teen girls at risk for eating disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative is anticipated to offer up to five awards in varying amounts. The application is open until Friday, July 15 and can be found [here](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the mental health of Americans across the nation, with youth exhibiting the steepest declines in mental health. Two million children alive today will develop an eating disorder before they reach 20 years old<sup>1</sup> and this mental illness has the second highest mortality rate of any psychiatric condition. Medical admissions for adolescents with eating disorders more than doubled in 2020.<sup>2</sup> Eating disorder emergency room admissions for teen girls 12-17 years of age have doubled since 2019.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, recent heartbreaking reporting has revealed the severe harms of social media on youth body image, negative appearance comparison, and risk for eating disorders, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's the EDC's hope that the initiative can include research into the harms of social media and ways to incorporate social media literacy into prevention programs.

The Office of Women's Health directs applicants to:

- Create partnerships between community organizations, hospitals, and nutritionists to address gaps in care.
- Address modifiable risk factors, encourage behavior change, and improve health outcomes.
- Create developmentally appropriate education and outreach for teen girls at risk for eating disorders. Interventions should address the contributing factors of social isolation, loneliness, or social restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic which have exacerbated eating disorders among teen girls.

The EDC was pleased to see this opportunity mentioned in the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request released earlier this year and are appreciative for the continued spotlight on eating disorders. The OWH grant will help to further expand the research on the pandemic's impact on mental health and eating disorders while helping communities become better educated and more aware of these illnesses.

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<sup>1</sup> Deloitte Access Economics. The Social and Economic Cost of Eating Disorders in the United States of America: A Report for the Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders and the Academy for Eating Disorders. June 2020. Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/striped/report-economic-costs-of-eating-disorders/>.

<sup>2</sup> Dave Little, MD, Adrianna Teriakidis, PhD, Eric Lindgren, JD, Steven Allen, MD, Eric Barkley, Lily Rubin-Miller, MPH, April 2021, <https://epicresearch.org/articles/increase-in-adolescent-hospitalizations-related-to-eating-disorders>

<sup>3</sup> Radhakrishnan, Lakshmi, Leeb, Rebecca, Bitsko, Rebecca . . . & Anderson, Kayla. (February, 18, 2022). Pediatric Emergency Department Visits Associated with Mental Health Conditions Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic—United States, January 2019-January 2022. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 71. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/pdfs/mm7108e2-H.pdf>

*The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a federal advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can be found at [eatingdisorderscoalition.org](http://eatingdisorderscoalition.org).*

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