Raising awareness: mental health service gaps.

Virtual roundtable will focus on access, affordability, and policy.

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CONTACT
Rachel K. Owen, PhD
Director | MOST Policy Initiative
573-507-0141 | rachel@mostpolicyinitiative.org

JEFFERSON CITY – Limited access to mental health services, especially in rural Missouri, and the role of public policy in addressing that gap are among the topics of the next Local Science Engagement Network (LSEN) virtual roundtable, set for 3 p.m. Friday May 28.

The roundtable aims to raise awareness of rural, farm, and overall access to mental healthcare, and to clearly communicate about the resources that are available. Equally important is whether resources are affordable.

For more details and to register, go to https://mostpolicyinitiative.org/mental-healthcare-access-in-missouri/. LSEN is an outreach of the Missouri Science & Technology (MOST) Policy Initiative.

Roundtable panelists include Sen. Greg Razer, D-Kansas City; Rep. Lisa Thomas, R-Lake Ozark; Xavier Ransome, associate data analyst at the non-profit Government Employees Health Association; and Patricia Alafaireet, PhD, an assistant teaching professor of health management and informatics at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine.

"One of our main jobs at LSEN is to connect policymakers with the scientists doing the research and work, and build relationships in the state," English explains. "That's the whole point of this – so they can work together in the future. The policymakers care deeply about these issues and so do the researchers. Hopefully, we can get them together."

The roundtable discussion is from 3-4 p.m., followed by a Zoom afterparty from 4-5 p.m.

MOST Policy Initiative is a nonprofit organization aimed to improve the health, sustainability, and economic growth of Missouri communities by providing objective, nonpartisan information to Missouri's decision-makers.

The Local Science Engagement Network is a multi-disciplinary network of scientists and science enthusiasts dedicated to elevating the role of science in evidence-based public policy. The goal is to help science advocates identify opportunities to engage civic and policy leaders in the role and use of the evidence-based perspective in finding locally relevant solutions.