



New Initiative To Address Children's Behavioral Health

By [Matthew Leonard](#) ~ Posted Thu, 04/09/2015 - 3:43pm



There's a pressing need in Rochester and the Finger Lakes for more services to help kids and teens who need behavioral health care.

That according to Dr. Mike Scharf from the University of Rochester Medical Center.

He's leading a new project at the Greater Rochester Health Foundation to identify community needs and come up with policy and funding strategies to improve access to mental health care for kids.

The Commission on Children's Behavioral Health is being chaired by former Rochester Mayor Tom Richards and former Rochester Business Alliance President Sandy Parker. It expects to deliver a report this fall.

"There's a tremendous lack of knowledge, even at times among health care people, about the effective treatment strategies and matching them with the specific youth who have mental health issues and challenges," Scharf explained at the announcement in Rochester on Thursday.

In a community that prides itself on access to health care, there are still gaps. John Urban is the president and CEO of the Greater Rochester Health Foundation. He says when it comes to children's behavioral health, parents are often desperate for more help.

"We have child care centers across the community who were finding it necessary to expel children as young as 3 years old, and that's simply not acceptable."

The Foundation is launching a commission to find ways to make behavioral health services more available. It expects to deliver a report this fall.

Scott Fybush/WXXI News