

SAGAMORE INSTITUTE

Sagamore Institute hires Jay Chaudhary to lead mental health and community wellness initiatives

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Sagamore Institute announced today that Jay Chaudhary, director of the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction, will join the Indianapolis-based research organization in October as its new senior fellow for mental health and community wellness.

Chaudhary also will serve as strategy director for the Indiana Mental Health Roundtable and continue his national leadership in advancing innovative solutions for improving behavioral health.

The new position is funded by the Valinhos Foundation and Stephen H. Simon.

"I am excited to join Sagamore to continue the vital work of finding ways to safeguard and improve the mental health and wellness of people not only in Indiana but across the country," Chaudhary said. "Sagamore is solutions oriented in its research, and this new role -- which will include figuring out how the public, private, academic and philanthropic sectors work together to promote thriving families, nurturing communities, and high-quality mental health care -- is a natural extension of the Institute's important work."

During Chaudhary's time as director of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction and chair of the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission, Indiana made considerable progress on mental health, including a nationally recognized rollout of the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline and recent selection in the federal Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic demonstration program.

As a result, Indiana rose considerably in Mental Health America's comprehensive state rankings, from routinely ranking in the 40s to a most recent ranking of 24th. Chaudhary received numerous accolades for his work, including the "20 under 40" award from the Council of State Governments and the "Champion of Justice" award from the Indiana Judges Association.

"Jay's experience in developing community-based solutions for behavioral health care is a wonderful extension of the work undertaken by the Indiana Mental Health Roundtable," Julie Veldman-Harris, executive director of the Valinhos Foundation, said. "Jay's new role with Sagamore emerged from the IMHR's essential work of bringing leaders together to create the right conditions for innovative approaches to mental health care in Indiana."

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In 2023, the Mental Health Roundtable brought together more than 500 leaders from over 200 organizations to discuss behavioral health-care solutions in Indiana. The Mental Health Roundtable's 2024 summit, in collaboration with Riley Children's Health, convened leaders to discuss the youth mental health crisis facing Indiana and the nation.

"We are excited to see Sagamore continue to lead collaborative efforts that are improving the health and quality of life for many people in Indiana and beyond," Stephen Simon, a director of the Herbert Simon Family Foundation, said.

Sagamore Institute, founded by former U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and former White House senior official Jay Hein, focuses its research and initiatives on issues surrounding opportunity, civic engagement and national defense. The institute is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its founding in 2024.

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