To Whom It May Concern,

Premeditated school shootings are tragic events that are becoming more frequent and familiar throughout the nation. These violent acts have resulted in the loss of life and livelihood, leaving survivors and impacted communities with deep emotional scars. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is committed to preventing targeted school violence.

Today I am writing to inform you that the Los Angeles County School Threat Assessment and Response Team (START) has expanded across the County in an effort to meet an increasing demand for vigilance and proactive service. START is comprised of multidisciplinary teams of mental health professionals dedicated to preventing targeted school violence in partnership with law enforcement, schools systems (from elementary through graduate levels, including students, teachers, and administrators), health and human service providers, families, households, and ultimately, the community at large. START provides training, consultation, screening, assessment, identification, intervention, and case management alongside risk mitigation services.

Timely interventions have prevented school shootings, and START, a proactive model established a decade ago to address the need for a comprehensive threat prevention and management program, has become a national model. START uses an assessment process that tailors intervention strategies based on objective, data-driven methods for determining risk. Since its inception, START has collaborated in response to over 11,000 incidents of potential school violence.

The START expansion allocates additional staff to each Service (Planning) Area. These resources will enhance existing services and ensure more timely responses to students of concern. START will provide Targeted Violence Prevention training throughout the County each year. Trainings will be at no cost and include Continuing Education Units for Emergency Medical Services, law enforcement, and mental health clinicians.

For further information and/or to set up a training for your school or area, please do not hesitate to contact ACCESS at (800) 854-7771 or via email START@dmh.lacounty.gov.

In partnership,

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.
Director

hope. recovery. wellbeing.