

Our City. Our County. United for Change.

Adam Bello, Monroe County Executive
Mayor Lovely A. Warren, City of Rochester

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, October 7, 2020**

Commission to Host Virtual Town Hall on Mental Health and Addiction

(Rochester, New York) - The Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE) will host a virtual Zoom Community Voices Session, 6 to 8 p.m., tomorrow, Thursday, Oct. 8. The Mental Health and Addiction Workgroup of the Commission is seeking to capture the personal experiences and ideas of community members to better understand how structural racism and inequities have prevented individuals and families from receiving the best available care for mental health and substance use problems.

"I am excited to hear from the citizens of this community who want to join us in overcoming systemic and institutional inequities as well as racism in our city and our county," said RASE Co-chair Dr. Mohammad Shafiq. "We are at a tipping point and this input and feedback will help the Commission develop recommendations for policies and laws that are inclusive of the community's specific needs."

The virtual Community Voices Session includes a panel of behavioral health experts, community leaders, as well as children and family advocates who will answer questions and offer feedback to the community. Event panelists include: Lawana Jones, President & Chief Executive Officer, The Autism Council of Rochester, Inc., Elizabeth J. Santos, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology & Medicine Clinical Chief, Division of Geriatric Mental Health & Memory Care University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry, April Aycok, Ed. D, LMHC URM/Strong, Recovery Adolescent and Young Adult Substance Use Disorder, Clinical Coordinator, Rudy Rivera, Executive Director, Father Laurence Tracy Advocacy Center and Melanie Funchess, Community Mental Health Advocate, Greater Rochester Black Agenda Group.

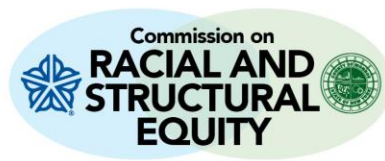
Those interested in speaking during the Community Voices Session can join the Zoom conference by signing up at www.rocrase.com/events. The event will be also live streamed on the RASE Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ROCRASE for those who simply wish to watch.

The RASE Health and Social Services Workgroup will host its virtual community session on Wednesday, Oct. 14 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom Conference.

The Commission on RASE was established to identify the structural racism and inequities in Rochester and Monroe County that systematically pose barriers to the success for our vulnerable residents.

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