



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NH Healthy Families Invests in Cyberbullying Prevention With Youth Impact Award**

**Bedford, NH, (March 31, 2022)** – NH Healthy Families announced today it is spreading awareness about cyberbullying prevention by participating in the [Centene Institute Youth Impact Award for Cyberbullying Prevention](#). NH Healthy Families is encouraging youth ages 14-19 to participate in the Youth Impact Award to help take action to promote prevention with their peers and community.

Cyberbullying is harassment that takes place over digital devices, social media platforms, and gaming experiences. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), 59% of U.S. teens have been bullied or harassed online. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can take place 24 hours a day and includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, sharing personal information to humiliate, excluding someone on purpose, and more.

“Cyberbullying can lead to social and emotional distress, behavioral problems, and mental health issues,” said Samuel DiCapua, NH Healthy Families Chief Medical Officer. “Youth who are bullied are at increased risk for substance misuse, academic problems, and violence to others. It’s no surprise that the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the youth mental health crisis in New Hampshire.”

New Hampshire schools [reported 2,152 bullying incidents](#) in the 2018 to 2019 school year. Of those 2,152 reports, 976 were investigated by the schools and found substantiated. The numbers have stayed steady in recent years, Department of Education data reveals. The organization, Stopbullying.gov suggests that children and youth who are bullied over time are more likely than those not bullied to experience depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, contributing to the 15,000 Granite Staters age 12-17 who have depression [National Alliance on Mental Illness].

“Cyberbullying can be devastating to young victims who may feel overwhelmed or helpless. Cyberbullying is often mean-spirited, but with the prevalence of social media, it can also be a serious public health threat,” said Frank Edelblut, commissioner of education for the New Hampshire Department of Education. “I commend NH Healthy Families for investing in cyberbullying prevention and supporting the Youth Impact Award so that New Hampshire youth can be actively engaged in curbing this emerging problem.”



Following are tips from the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Department of Health and Human Services to raise awareness and prevent cyberbullying that can inspire contest entries as well as be used to handle situations in everyday life.

- Talk about bullying to reduce stigma and identify potential instances of cyberbullying
- Plan for what to do if witnessing or experiencing bullying
- Teach youth to treat others respect and practice inclusivity
- Create positive community environments that build confidence and social skills
- If bullied, immediately stop communication and block the person via digital channels
- Speak up if you feel uncomfortable with the comments or actions of someone
- Understand the possible warning signs of emotional distress

To enter the Youth Impact Award, participants must review a short video and complete curriculum on cyberbullying before submitting their own original visual art entry that conveys cyberbullying awareness and prevention. The contest is open to eligible youth nationwide. In addition to several national prizes, all submissions are eligible to account for up to 10 hours of community service. The contest is now open and runs until May 20, 2022.

For more information about the Youth Impact Award and how to enter, visit <https://www.centeneinstituteaward.com/cyberbullying-prevention/2022>.

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### **About NH Healthy Families**

NH Healthy Families™ is a health plan serving the needs of New Hampshire residents through the state Medicaid program, Ambetter™ marketplace exchange product, and Wellcare, our Medicare Advantage product. Our locally-based employees and fully-integrated Medical, Behavioral and Wellness programs provide innovative health solutions to every region of the state with the express purpose of transforming the health of the community one person at a time. NH Healthy Families is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a diversified, multi-national healthcare enterprise. Information is available at [NHHealthyFamilies.com](http://NHHealthyFamilies.com).

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