

Speaker 1: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome, and thank you for joining today's HUD Strong Families Summit Youth Extravaganza supporting our kids. Before we begin please ensure that you have opened the WebEx participant and chat panels by using the associated icons located at the bottom right hand side of your screen. Please know all audio connections are muted at this time and this conference is being recorded.

If you require technical assistance, please send a chat to the event producer. You are welcome to submit written questions throughout the presentation which will be addressed at the Q&A session of the webinar. To submit a written question, select all panelists from the dropdown menu in the chat panel, then enter your question in the message box provided and send. With that, I will turn the conference over to Jason Amahaji. Jason, please go ahead.

Jason: Thanks so much everyone for joining us today for this very special HUD Strong Families Summer Youth Extravaganza. We know that this has been a very challenging year and a half for everybody and particularly for youth who have been forced to go into virtual schooling and dealing with challenges in terms of digital equity and engagement, and they're now very much looking forward to being back in school in the fall, so we are here, very proud to be, with the Department of Education today to present some tools, resources, upcoming events, to help support our youth as they re-enter the schools for the fall.

To kick it off today, I'm very honored to hand it off to Nick Simmons from the US Department of Education. Nick comes to us with years of education experience, policy experience, and now as a senior advisor to the Secretary of Education to talk a little bit about the plan for safe return to school and some of the latest guidance. Nick.

Nick: Thanks, Jason, very much. Can everybody hear me okay? Great. So great to be here today, and to speak to everybody about our efforts for school reopening. I wanted to kick us off with just a few quick numbers and going through these numbers is actually going to require participation from everybody, so I'm going to give some numbers that are going to have more or less the phrases as questions and wanted you all to think about what you thought the answers to these questions were.

As we approach school reopening, four different numbers for you. The first is 16 million versus 750,000. We want you to kind of think about, just take a guess as to what you think these numbers are representing as you think about the school during COVID and for the upcoming school year. The second one is four months versus six months. The third is 80% of parents, and that one is 80% of parents reported what?

And the fourth question is there is a 12% increase in what? What do you think 16 million if you had to guess versus 750,000, what does that represent? Four months versus six months. 80% of parents reported what? And there was a 12% increase in what? Now, I know there is not a lot of context here but don't be afraid to just write down whatever you think these numbers represent.

Okay, I will move into the answers. 16 million versus 750,000. 16 million students have not been inside a school building for the past 18 months. They've been learning remotely since March 2020, and to put that into context and how unprecedented that is and how large of a number, before the pandemic, we only had in this country 750,000 students learning virtually.

This is a really unprecedented moment for a high number of students, and remember, that's just an uninterrupted learning remotely, but at some point over the last 18 months it's really been almost every student in America has spent some time learning remotely, so we are certainly in uncharted territory.

Four months versus six months. That is the number of months that white students are behind in reading and math, four months behind, compared to students of color and low income students. While the picture is grim for all students, being four months behind where they should be is bad enough, but there's an exacerbated wealth gap and racial gap where students of color and those who are low income are even further behind. Six months.

80% of parents reported some level of concern about their child's mental health or social and emotional wellbeing since the pandemic started, and 35% of those parents weren't just somewhat concerned but reported being extremely concerned about their child's mental health, since the beginning of the pandemic.

And finally, there's a 12% increase from last year in overall rates of student absenteeism. That is anywhere between an additional 12.3 to 4.6 million eighth and 12th graders are reported to be chronically absent more than there were last year, and 42% of those who are new to being chronically absent were not attending school at all.

I don't mean to be too grim and start us off in too depressing of a place but I think it's important for us to understand where we are as a country in terms of public education and the education of our young people, and just how important it is to get the next couple of months right in terms of addressing all of the issues that I mentioned.

First and foremost, we know we need to get our kids back into school and do so safely so that they are able to learn safely, families are able to know that their students are in a good place, and not unnecessarily exposed to COVID-19, so we need to open safely. Second, we need to address this as we just showed, the learning loss and academic loss that occurred over the last year and a half, and also, almost more importantly, address the social and emotional trauma and distress that students and families and educators have faced.

More than anything, we need to rebuild community in our schools. We need to have our students fall in love with learning again, and we need to do all of this safely. That's what we're focused on at the Department of Education and throughout the Biden administration, and I just want to share with you a few resources that we have. First and foremost, most of you probably saw the news yesterday. The CDC has updated its

guidance for all members of the K-12 school community. Educators, school staff, and students.

And the CDC is now recommending that all students or all members of the school community wear a mask regardless of vaccination status, and that's really important because of the updates in the delta variant. Ultimately, if there's one thing I could say about the CDC, if you haven't seen online the new guidance, please take a look. Other than the universal masking, we know that school communities are all facing different circumstances, whether that's the density of the school or transmission rate in the community, or the ability to ascertain vaccination status.

Ultimately, the CDC and the Department are recommending a series of prevention strategies that can be layered depending on what the circumstances are at your school to keep schools open, because it's most important to keep schools open this fall, and so those strategies are distancing, masking, most importantly is vaccination. As we know that is the absolute most important and helpful COVID-19 mitigation strategy, so we have a series of resources from the Department that can help with addressing all of the challenges that I mentioned, so on the best practices clearinghouse website for the Department, there are tons of guidance and support materials and resources for creating that safe school environment to keep schools open.

There is also materials to address social-emotional needs of students and of course the academic needs. I will leave it there and if there's time for questions, happy to take a few.

Jason: Great. Thanks so much, Nick. I think you highlighted a lot of things that are on folks' mind right now, especially with the new CDC mask guidance. I know we've only got you for a few minutes so if folks want to ask some questions in the chat, I will just say we had some really great guesses that came in, so I think 12% increase in truancy, that was on the nose, and we also had a guess for slide one that it was about numbers in terms of in school learning versus virtual learning, so it seems like folks are attuned to what's happening, certainly.

Nick, just a question for you on this clearinghouse. Obviously your audience here is from the housing side, resident services, folks who work oftentimes with youth and families, and some I see here in the mental student supports. What would you say, if folks could just have one key takeaway, is something folks could really do to get the word out, to help ensure safe reentry to schools, if they're out in the community and doing their work?

Nick: Yeah, yeah, I think if there's anything folks on the call know it's that really it takes a village to set our students up for success, and I think the next month is going to be critical. Remember those 16 million students. I mean, if you put yourself in the shoes of an incoming freshman, a 9th grader, that student may have not been inside a school building since they were in 7th grade, which is kind of hard to believe, and so there's going to be obvious reluctance, there's going to be a transition process.

That student might be thinking about how important is school really to him or her, do the odds of being successful feel overwhelming if you're five months being? And so it really just takes an encouraging, supportive community to make sure that students are, one, enrolling, just checking in to make sure that the families you're working with have enrolled their students. Number one, they just cannot have that ... the dropout rate, this is really the make or break moment.

Two, that students and families have gotten vaccinated. That's critical. And three is that just reminding, if you're in the community and have trust with those you're working with, helping remind families that the actual rate of transmission inside schools is pretty low compared to the rest of the community because teachers are very vigilant about enforcing the rules, so we see in the data that sometimes the fears of returning are a little bit more than they need to be in terms of the probability of exposure.

So just helping being, obviously the parent knows best, but to me, since we can get the facts out there on returning to school, on vaccinations, and then encouraging our students, that's going to be critical.

Jason: Great. I think this definitely takes a village. Vaccinations, and then that the risk is low. Speaking of vaccinations, are you aware of any efforts sort of from the Department of Education to encourage schools to do on site vaccination clinics or to provide COVID vaccine? We know right now it's available to 12 and up, in many cases needing parent permission, and potentially will expand to five to 11 at some point in the summer or fall. What sorts of opportunities will be available for folks to get the vaccine if they haven't been able to already?

Nick: Yeah, yeah. The supply for vaccines should be kind of readily available almost in every community sort of anywhere you look, whether it's the local pharmacy, or local health clinic, so I think it's more just about, one, if the family isn't aware of all those opportunities, there is the CDC website, there is tons of, you can just Google, "Find vaccine near me." You'll get a dozen or more supportive resources to find the vaccine usually within a half a mile, but beyond that I think parents and families want to be ... it's a understandably potentially scary prospect, and so having vaccine access and distribution in communities and around people that families trust is also really important so we are working with school districts across the country to promote on school site vaccine clinics, and those on the call who are collaborating at all with their local school district, the more you can push and urge your schools to host one of these on site vaccine clinics, there is a ton of resources online in the clearinghouse.

From the Department, from the White House, on how to set up a vaccine clinic on your school site, and it's really, really, really easy to coordinate with the local health department or pharmacy to set these up, and you see it's fun. There's back to school pep rally vaccine clinics. It can be a whole day of fun, come in and dunk your teacher while you come in to get the vaccine, so we've seen that in Detroit and LA. We've seen older students hosting forms to encourage other students to get vaccinated, so there's lots of fun ways to do it.

Jason: Great. Well, thank you so much. We really appreciate your time and sharing this with us today. If folks want to reach out, who should they contact? Obviously they have their local school districts and schools. Is there any place at the Department of Ed where folks are trying to make these connections they should reach out? Or is this website kind of one of the best places to go?

Nick: This website is one of the best places but why don't I drop into the chat? I'm going to grab the few others that I think are the most helpful.

Jason: Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Nick, and thanks for all the questions. Feel free to continue asking questions and I know we have a lot more to go through today, so thanks for setting the stage, Nick. You know, as we are sort of going forward with all of the back to school events, and Nick, sorry, if you could just go to the next slide until I get the presenter permission back, you know, the HUD Strong Families team has put together just a few things to consider. One, we know the Olympics kicked off last week and it was actually during a very fortuitous time, as it's during National Youth Sports Week, so the National Youth Sports strategy kicked off in July and we know that this is a great engagement point for youth, so we put that out there sort of thinking about summer activity in the community, to consider youth sports engagement.

We also know that the national night out is August 3rd, so coming up just around the corner next week. That's an annual event of course and this year the communities are holding that in August. We also have a national HBCU week coming up in September, also supported by the Department of Education, and some are for older youth who are looking for opportunities to engage with HBCUs.

That's an opportunity not only to have events but also to sort of encourage folks to think about that, and then finally, September 13th to 17th is the National PTA back to school week. Many students actually went back to school before then, but depending on where folks are in the country, that's a really critical engagement time, too, so typically with Strong Families we say focus on Mother's Day, Father's Day, this year Juneteenth, 4th of July, spring events, bring family together. And this year we're also encouraging using the summer and fall to doing youth engagement activities and you can use any of these sort of anchors to support your efforts in addition to others that may resonate locally.

But one really great resource that I'm thrilled to be able to share with you all today is actually a new toolkit put together by HUD's Choice Neighborhoods team, and this is around supporting our kids' education. It includes tools to strengthen resident families and students during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. I'm really, really pleased to have Kyline joining us from the Choice Neighborhoods team who helped put this together to share a little bit about what this resource entails, and actually this is fresh off the presses. It's available today on our HUD website, but we'll get into that at the end.

But we hope that this is a really useful tool, again, as you're planning your returning to school strategy to support youth in your community. Kyline.

Kylene: Thanks so much, Jason, and as Jason said, we're really excited. This is a brand new toolkit that just posted today and is really targeted to PHAs and HUD-assisted housing providers to equip you all with tools for you and your partners to support kids and their families as they are returning back to school and as we are during this time of COVID-19 and beyond, and we did this in partnership with Wendy Lopez of Pluto, of Learning Heroes, as well as our partners from Econometrica, so I just want to talk a little bit about the purpose of this toolkit.

We all know that the kids we serve in public housing were some of those hardest hit by school closures and the instability that the pandemic caused. I mean, we heard from Nick that the learning loss for low-income kids and kids of color broadly can be six months or more, and for our families that might be much more. There are projections that for example black and Latino students may even lose a year to 16 months of learning, so it's going to take everyone's help to ensure that our kids are not left behind, and as THAs, you and your partners are in a unique and great position to reach some of the most vulnerable kids.

And the good news is that so many of you have already done incredible work. This toolkit gathers promising practices from PHAs and from the Choice Neighborhoods communities that we work with, as well as national resources and expertise.

What's in the toolkit? The toolkit is based on what PHAs and communities were telling us, that they and their families needed to support learning in the face of COVID-19. It focuses on four key topics. First is how to empower parents to support their children's learning. This includes a series of family flyers which we'll talk about more. National strategies to help kids catch up. Case studies and resources for developing effective tutoring and afterschool programming. And then there's examples from PHAs and community who ran learning huts while schools were closed. I'm going to get into just some highlights from the first section which is about supporting our families and empowering parents to support their children's learning, and the heart of this section is really a series of family tips and resource flyers.

And we know that parents and caregivers have always been critical to their children's learning, but now we know that parents' roles will be even more important to spin the tide of learning loss. These six family flyers include tips and national resources in parent-friendly language and we have heard from our communities that after the last year many parents are feeling overwhelmed. Right? These flyers are based on family needs we heard bubbling from PHAs and communities, and are aimed at making parents' job a little bit easier.

I'll walk through those six topics of the flyers now. First there's a quick tips guide that pools together top resources and tips. There's a setting the stage for at home learning. Hopefully these days are over, and this is just a remnant from the past but if there's any localized school closures or remote learning this flyer and resource is available. There's tips for how to keep kids motivated and engaged in learning, and this was especially a top concern that we heard. One on how to communicate with teachers.

One on how parents can help with learning, especially for families who might struggle themselves with reading and math, and then the last flyer is on how to handle the stress COVID-19 has caused. I just want to get into a couple of examples of these resources, and this first example is an app to teacher video series from Learning Heroes where national teachers of the year actually responded to real parent questions, and you can see here this is the question from a parent who's talking about how to engage her son in reading when he doesn't want to engage.

And so this is an example of a resource from the keeping your child motivated flyer. And there's many more videos and many more topics in that series. This is a couple of examples. This is in the how parents can help with learning and schoolwork flyer. There's a slew of learning resources here, from free activities in English and Spanish from Wide Open School, to a guide from the Ira Center on how parents can help kids with math if they don't know how to do math themselves, but I think even more importantly the flyer tips themselves give parents simple ideas about how they can help their child learn through everyday moments, like making a family recipe together.

And again, these are the things that's going to help make up the gap for some of the learning loss that has happened, trying to use every single moment that we can. Here's another resource example. We heard a parent from one of our communities asking and really trying her best and saying, "I know I'm not supposed to yell at my kids when I'm trying to get them to do schoolwork, but how can I get them to listen without yelling?" And I think most parents can relate to this question, especially in these stressful times, so we wanted to provide some practical tools when kids weren't listening.

So the toolkit includes some tips from understood.org and videos with practical techniques from New York City Schools. And one final resource example. This one I think is just really exciting. This is a readiness check from Learning Heroes. Parents can't use what is a quick 10 to 15 minute check to see how their child is doing with key math and reading skills from their grade level and then get very targeted resources, and how it works is kids enter their grade and then answer three to five short questions. Again, it only takes about 10 to 15 minutes and can even be done on a smartphone, and the whole purpose behind this is it really helps parents save time and stress because it can help them see exactly where to focus their effort, what key important skills need to be addressed, and then connect them with very specific targeted resources and activities so their children can learn those skills, and some of those sites are from Khan Academy and PDF Learning Media that those parents are connected to.

So to wrap up this section, the toolkit in addition to the flyers has ideas for how PHAs and their partners can share flyers, and just like we are doing with you all today, really showing is better than telling. We know that while sharing information is the first step parents are more likely to use resources when they have actually shown them and become familiar with them, so just some quick ideas that are gone into in the toolkit are showing partners and resident council suppliers and walking through some of those resources and tips with them so then they can share relevant content with families. Identifying tips that are relevant to individual parents, so through whatever touchpoints and conversations you already have with your staff already has with families, whether it be case management check ins or COVID relief events or back to school drives, it can be an

opportunity to find out what topics parents need help with and then email or text them to tip them resources that are most relevant.

Other ideas include you and your partner could host a demo session for parents, do a fun social media challenge, or even help establish some family support groups. And the next section in the toolkit is really about helping kids catch up, and it walks through some key strategies to do that. National experts have identified several strategies to address learning loss, and these include tutoring, which we'll get into a little more in the next section, grade-level reading exposure, and teachers and their partners can really help address this by first increasing access to grade-level books and encouraging parents and children to read.

Partnerships are going to be important to utilize whatever resources are available and supporting parents in literacy at home which of course the first section of the toolkit and the family flyers that we just talked about can really help with. And in this section there's also a lot of pre-summer learning resources that can also be used. The next section of the toolkit spends a lot of time talking about resources and information on developing quality out-of-school time programming and tutoring. Tutoring in particular has been found to accelerate learning when it is done well, and the toolkit walks through what key elements of effective tutoring include. These are things like high dosage tutoring which is just a fancy word that's saying that it's three times or more per week.

It talks about how volunteers and college students can be effective tutors when they're given training, and another thing it talks about is the importance of the relationship between the student and the tutor for learning, so there's a lot of different elements and the toolkit also provides free resources that can help support these elements, so there are links to, for example, a tutoring program design guide, training materials, sample lesson plans, and more.

This section also provides what I think are some really critical insights from some early national research into what parents value most about out of school time programming, and this is really important to be conscious of because that ultimately helps us engage parents and enroll kids, right? And be successful at doing that. The upside of the research is that parents tended to focus on the social and emotional elements of out of school time programming, and when I say out of school time programming that really just means afterschool summer programming.

And parents tended to focus on whether programs gave their child a chance to explore their interests and pursue their individuality. They found that the mentoring and caring relationships that can be provided between staff and the children during these programs were really important, and the way the parents tended to evaluate a program was really from taking cues from their kids. Does my child seem happy? Do they want to go to the program? I think these are all important for us to think about as we are trying to work with our partners to develop that kind of programming.

And last, there is this really wonderful case study that comes from Atlanta. A highly effective tutoring program that was run by the Atlanta Housing Authority in which they

partnered with Atlanta Public Schools and United Way to deliver a tutoring program that was really tailored to children's needs. The way that this collaboration works is there was an Atlanta Housing case manager who continually engaged with families. The school staff then provided insights and real time data on the kids and United Way oversaw and identified high quality tutoring partners, so again, really wonderful case study.

And just the last part of the toolkit is a series of case studies on learning hubs, which were safe spaces for kids, particularly public housing kids and other low income students in neighborhoods who could go and receive their virtual school instruction as well as enrichment activities when schools were closed, and there's case studies coming from Phoenix where Phoenix Housing partnered with the Department of Recreation in Omaha.

75 North, the community organization, worked with their local community college, and in Aligini County the Department of Health and Human Services funded specific plots at afterschool program providers, childcare providers, and other partners to provide kids with those opportunities. These case studies go into what program was provided, how the dates were structured, what roles each organization played, and obviously hopefully learning hubs are a thing of the past but I think these case studies also have great implications and practices on just wonderful partnerships and how to serve students' needs out of school time in general, in a safe way.

Very excitingly the toolkit is now up. As of today, you will see the link here. That's the direct link. The individual flyers will soon be posted, I will say, by sometime next week. The flyers are already included in the toolkit themselves so you can get those family flyers there but we also plan to individually post each of those flyers so it's just super easy for any PHA or partner to just pull all of them or one of them and put them on their website. We plan to do that in the next week or so.

And then for those of you interested in more information about the Choice Neighborhoods program, there's our website down there at the bottom. With that, thank you. I'll turn it over to Jason

Jason: Great. Thanks so much, Kyline, and really great resource here, so I hope folks have a chance to check it out. Some questions already coming through the chat. How can we get the flyers? So we'll go ahead and post the links right now into the chat, but I do want to give folks a chance just to ask general questions. We have a few more resources to share but there's a lot that Kyline just went over, so walk with us to getting those questions together and sharing that in the chat.

Kyline, can you talk just a little bit about ... ? Obviously, you're on the Choice Neighborhoods team and that's a fantastic grant opportunity that has a lot of heft to it. For folks who maybe don't have Choice Neighborhoods or don't even have one of our supportive services programs like FFS or Ross, is there anything in here that would really require that kind of grant funding to do? Or are these kind of tools that pretty much anybody could execute in their community?

Kyline: Yeah, we were really conscious about making this a toolkit that could be used for any PHA, any housing provider. Again, a lot of our tips, a lot of our information and ideas, really encourage folks to work with their parents or to use regular touchpoints that they might already have. If you have a supportive services staff, obviously you probably have more regular touchpoints at events or case management meetings, but even for those who don't already have supportive services staff, just if you're having a back to school drive, that's an opportunity to share this information with families.

If you have a provider or a provider partner who might be able to share information with families, or if you're thinking about maybe working with a community organization to offer some type of out of school trend programming that has a lot of great resources to share with that partner and help you in those conversations. There's also ideas for bringing in resident counsels as well and informing them because they might be trusted partners in the community as well and might be able to share the word with parents and families about different resources, so this is designed so that it can really be widely used.

Jason: Awesome. And we're getting some questions in. Let me just ask one more. I just popped the links into the chat so folks can kind of check those out. When we're kind of framing questions, we often talk about vaccines, and health partner, as sort of like a dating analogy. Right? Who makes the first move?

Some PHAs may have great relationships with their schools already and others may not. What would be your recommendation for folks in terms of establishing that relationship?

Kyline: Yeah, you know, again, a lot of the stuff that's in the toolkit actually isn't necessarily dependent on this great relationship with schools. A lot of times our communities have turned to local education partners, community organizations, and other folks for that support. PHAs themselves often have a closer relationship with our friends and families than schools themselves have, but I would say that one thing that has come up from communities in terms of having a relationship with the schools is trying to find the right person. Obviously a natural touchpoint is reaching out to a principal, but sometimes people are really busy.

There's a lot going on, especially with schools reopening, so if you're not finding a lot of traction there, just trying to see what your other connections are, what other school staff might be available, or if one of your partners might have a better connection to someone at your local school or at your local school district, so that's what I'd recommend.

Jason: Awesome. Dealing with a fire alarm where I am, so I'm just going to ask a question before maybe one of my colleagues, Ramel, can help moderate the chat line, and Kyline I've given you presenter privileges if you want to go through the next couple slides in a minute, but quick question. When you're talking about putting these resources together for students, we talk about summer events, opportunities. What would you suggest as sort of an easy way for folks to get started if they're not already doing this kind of work

to engage with youth, particularly those who have been hard to reach over the past year because of virtual engagement and the pandemic?

Kylene: Yeah, I think that's a great question, and again I would really point people to the family flyers that we created. We created these so PHAs would have things that were ready to use, resources that they could readily share with folks, so I would say the first thing is accessing those flyers, posting them on their website, sharing them on social media if they have a social media presence, sharing them with their partner, sharing them with their resident counsels, and then if they're in any position to think about what are those regular touchpoints or what else can they do to try to show families some of these resources and to share more individualized type tips?

Again, good as a toolkit. There's lots of different ideas there. But the family fires is where I would really suggest starting.

Jason: Great thank you.

Speaker 5: N this is from ... oh, Jason, I thought you were evacuating your building.

Jason: No, go ahead. I am, but go ahead.

Speaker 5: We'll give Jason a few minutes to evacuate the building safely, so we did receive a comment in the chat box. A suggestion would be just reaching out to a local school district representative to try to build a bridge to school administrators, and especially as folks have been away for more than potentially just to rekindle those relationships with the school administrators, so great comment.

Jason: Great, and you know, I know we're getting a few more questions in the chat, but Kyline, if you could just sort of go through the next slide. I want to share a few more resources that are coming up, so this toolkit is obviously one great resource. Another obviously that Nick talked about, one of the three key points that he made, was around vaccines, and we know right now it's available for 12 and up but potentially some point soon could be extended to other age groups, so with that in mind throughout the past few months we've been encouraging folks to work and make their local health centers, pharmacies, and specifically what spots they need vaccination.

In many cases it's a two gen approach working with parents, and making sure that the parents are comfortable, that the youth is comfortable, and so it can be a little bit different strategy than when it comes to adult vaccinations. If you go to the next slide, coming up in August we're actually going to be launching a youth oriented campaign, Jab It Up, and this is just sort of a preview of our branding for that, but working in partnership with the CDC, they developed a great resource that they're calling the little jab book, and so we'll be actually inviting them to join us and all of you in early August to roll that out and share some resources there.

That includes strategies, tips, tricks, for vaccination, and things that are really field tested that work, so much like the toolkit, Kyline, that you just shared with us, that'll be

coming from the CDC, and they'll also be very generously taking some time to do a confidence console, which is really just like an open office hours for folks who are having challenges, want to talk through what they're seeing on the ground and maybe talk through ideas for making sure that folks get access to the right information and access to the vaccine, and then potentially we'll do the same thing we did in one of our CDC boot camps around vaccine confidence, but with more of a youth focus, so be on the lookout for all of that in August and then if we go to the next slide, we're also of course extremely aware of just the challenges that the pandemic has placed on many youth in mental health, in terms of isolation, depression.

Other challenges, and you know, we're going to be taking some time to focus on that in August as well. That's a key part of getting back to school safely and being in the right mental state, and we'll be sure to work with similar federal partners. As you may know, this is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month and of course mental health is an important issue for all youth but because of health disparities we want to make a special focus to ensure that communities that may not have fully had access to mental health resources do so.

That's just a little bit as a preview, and of course as always we'll be posting this stuff on the HUD exchange, so questions in the chat around that, but I want to open it up to more questions just on anything in the presentation today. The safe schools reopening, the CDC mask guidance which I will be sharing more about in our bulletin, CIH vaccine bulletin coming up tomorrow, but also with what Nick presented earlier for this wonderful choice toolkit that again we'll feature tomorrow in the bulletin or any of our upcoming resources in August. That'll be featured there as well.

Kylene: Jason, and there is a question of when folks will be able to get the slides from the presentation.

Jason: Yeah, great question. We post the recording. There's a little bit of a delay, obviously, but we'll post the recording and slides up on the HUD exchange and for attendees who registered we'll send those out after the webinar, so thanks to all who attended but of course we know not everybody could make it so please do share the recording with your colleagues who might find this information valuable, as well as adept. I will say that we had a great webinar recently yesterday on the Affordable Care Act for the special enrollment period.

The summer strength coverage that goes until August 15th, but keep that in mind, as well as recently they went on data and data sharing around vaccinations with state and local health departments. We have a great case study from Milwaukee, so if you've missed any of our webinars, our summer hot shots series, please check those out on the HUD exchange. They're all posted on there as well as some of our other not vaccine related webinars that we've done including on the child tax credit, all of which is really relevant to youth and families, so folks who are receiving the child tax credit payments in advance this year, that's an important resource, so please do also let us know what we could do better if you have ideas for future topics or things that we could help with secure efforts on the ground.

But we appreciate you all joining us today and for everything that you're doing to support youth in your community. I think we have just a few more questions. Kyline, if you could actually go back a couple slides to the link in the cover for the toolkit, one question with the case studies and in particular that you shared, it sounds like if folks actually dig into the toolkit there's a lot more detail in there and one of the best places to go is to talk to your peers, talk to your folks in other communities nearby to see what they're doing that works.

You know, are there things that you think just from the case study kind of that really jumped out to you that folks may want to think about as they're planning their efforts, returning to school?

Kyline: Yeah. I mean, I think in terms of if anyone is thinking about how can I offer particularly out of school time programming or tutoring or any sort of program like that, or how I can further strengthen it, these case studies, particularly the one from Atlanta, have really great information about how they worked really closely with partners to respond to families' needs.

And also, engage families really well, so you know, I think through these case studies you see a thread of having really strong collaborations with partners, and I think there's some ideas of from all these case studies, who are the different partners that you can try to pull on? There's examples of the schools, United Way, a local community college, Department of Recreation. Basically, it's whoever you already might have that relationship and connection with to really try to pull on those partners and start from there if you're building something.

And then I think the other thread is really ensuring that folks are talking with family, are getting to understand what their real needs are or getting to understand what their expectations are for their kids, and building that relationship, too, and that's really been successful in terms of engaging families, engaging kids, and making sure that they don't just sign up for a program but they actually show up and they continue to show up, so I would say that those are two themes that really come out of these case studies.

Jason: Wonderful, and we're already seeing a lot of great comments in the chat of PHAs that have partnered with programs to provide tutoring and that this is something that folks have really been working on throughout the pandemic. It sounds like that the presentation lined up with their effort, so that's great.

Just a closing question before we close it out, and again, really still appreciate you and the Choice Neighborhoods team and all the folks who worked on this toolkit, just that the partnership at the federal level is really important, in addition to our partners who also do policy management who have been working with us on the hot shots series. We know that this really does take a village, as Nick said, and so requires a lot of partnership on the ground.

For folks who are working with, as you mentioned, maybe their recreation partner or some community partners, and thinking about summer events, back to school events, I

would just encourage folks to think about vaccinations, youth engagement, but also digital equity. We know the pandemic really sort of highlighted the digital divide and so for folks who are not already aware of the emergency broadband benefit, that is a benefit available to all HUD-assisted residents of public housing and voucher housing as well as immune housing and that's a 50 dollar or more benefit a month for broadband access in home, in unit, so if you haven't been getting the word out about that please do share that with the folks in community.

It is a time limited benefit as of now so the sooner folks sign up the longer they can get that benefit, and again, 50 dollars a month is potentially a lot of savings, so yeah, I saw something in the chat. We can post a link to the emergency broadband benefit in the chat. But Kyline, as we close out, just any last thoughts you want to leave people with or want to make sure that they walk away with today? And thanks again for sharing these wonderful resources.

Kyline: Sure. Yeah, I would just say that I really encourage you to take a look at the toolkit. Regardless of whether this would be the first step for you to do something in the field of education, or if you're already running really great programs, it's just chock full of resources from, again, national resources, expert advice, as well as those promising practices from your peers and from communities, so yeah, I would just really encourage you all to do that, and I do also want to just say thank you to our partners who worked with us on this toolkit that I mentioned before but also to the Choice Neighborhood grantees who really inspired this toolkit and were the communities that we drew these examples from.

Jason: Wonderful, well, thank you, Kyline, and thanks again to everyone for joining us today. We know this is just one element of the HUD Strong Families Youth Summer push. We of course have some of our own ongoing longstanding initiatives like Book Rich Environments which many communities participate in, our STEM engagement efforts and we're always encouraging folks to do more and more with STEM and STEM activities for youth, in addition to helping avoid summer melt and encouraging folks to take advantage of youth employment opportunities over the summer and to prepare for higher education opportunities in the fall and beyond. We hope this is just one piece in the toolkit and a critical one as folks start getting ready to get back to school safely, so thank you so much for joining us, we look forward to having you with us at our future summer hot shots in August and September, and again please share your feedback about topics you want to hear about and we look forward to having you join us soon.

Stay safe and take care, everyone.

Speaker 1: That concludes our conference. Thank you for using Event Services. You may now disconnect.