



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cobb County Senior Mental Health Town Hall

Studies show that effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic are causing an increase in stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues that affect all ages. Senior adults (65+) are considered more at risk for COVID-19 and, as a result, many have become more isolated throughout the course of the pandemic. Recognizing this prevalence and a need for action, Cobb County Commissioner Jerica Richardson recently presented a Senior Mental Health Town Hall in collaboration with Cobb Collaborative and Cobb Senior Services. Cobb Collaborative Executive Director Irene Barton said, "Research tells us that depression affects more than 19 million Americans every year. While depression is typically not a normal part of the aging process, there is a strong likelihood of it occurring when other physical health conditions are present. Add to that the isolation that many older Cobb residents have endured over the past 2 years, Commissioner Richardson's office and the Collaborative leadership knew this was an important and timely topic. We are grateful to be able to bring attention to the issue of mental health as we work together with our partners to reduce stigma, connect people to resources and promote resiliency."

This event was held on Thursday, March 10, 2022 at the Senior Wellness Center located at 1150 Powder Springs Street in Marietta and attracted over 100 participants. The first hour featured exhibitors who shared a variety of resources available to Cobb's seniors. Afterward, there was a panel discussion featuring local experts who spoke on the variety of mental health needs for seniors, provided valuable information about resources and answered audience questions.

Commissioner Richardson observed, "Mental health is complex and exists on a spectrum. We can all agree that to the extent we are able to think, process, and act relies invariably on our state of mental health. At no time has this notion become more evident than on the other side of the pandemic to which the entire world was subject to a state of being that was paralyzing, worrisome, and lonely. Our senior community was not exempt from these feelings as we know seniors battle the throes of mental health and physical health on a daily basis. It challenges the sense of purpose and self, and this is unacceptable. The town hall was only a fraction of the kind of attention and effort that needs to be brought to the areas of depression, patient advocacy, dementia, connectedness, inclusion, security, food, medication, retirement, and so many other areas of need. My hope is that this event is not just a conversation, but a push for more to be involved in caring for and supporting our most seasoned members of our community."

Cobb Collaborative recently released a Mental Health Toolkit which contains mental health information and resources that are available for download. Those interested can find the toolkit online at bit.ly/MYM_Toolkits.

The Cobb Collaborative is a membership of non-profit organizations, local government, businesses, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, professional organizations, associations, and citizens who share ideas, expertise, and resources to improve outcomes for children and families in Cobb.