

**insight. leadership. impact.**

 **Patrick P. Lee**  
FOUNDATION

What propels a foundation down particular paths of philanthropy? For the Lee Foundation, commitments arise from three important sources. First is our **insight** into the deep and abiding effects of mental health issues on individuals, families and communities. Next is our **leadership** in advancing programs to enhance care and policies to improve the lives of people with mental illnesses. Last is the meaningful **impact** our support has on students pursuing higher education in STEM fields. This report describes our achievements in 2021.

2021



The pandemic, which began in 2020, continued to impact our community and our Foundation in 2021. Our work transitioned from sustaining critical services to supporting our grantees as they adapted to a new normal.

As demand for mental health services steadily rose, the workforce shortage – which had existed prior to the pandemic – became even more acute. To help alleviate the immediate need for more mental health practitioners, we explored ways to engage and educate primary care providers so they could assist with the management of more mental health and addiction services. Addressing the workforce shortage will remain one of our top priorities. We will continue to leverage our experience and **insight** to improve access to services and to increase the capacity of providers.

Meaningful policy changes and increased public funding for mental health services were at the core of our advocacy initiatives. Through Think Bigger Do Good we partnered with national experts on the most pressing issues in mental health. Our **leadership** in this work provided opportunities to present at state and national conferences and share best practices and innovative solutions to the challenges facing our communities.

In 2021, we supported 100 students through our mental health and STEM scholarship programs. As we have always anticipated, the **impact** of these investments extends far beyond financial relief to the students and their families. Western New York benefited from additional mental health professionals to serve the community. And our STEM scholars – many with dreams of starting their own businesses – joined companies eager to solve problems, innovate, and contribute to the broader American economy.

We are proud of what we achieved in collaboration with our grantees and community partners and look forward to building on these accomplishments in 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick P. Lee'.

Patrick P. Lee  
Founder

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane M. Mogavero'.

Jane M. Mogavero  
Executive Director

# insight.

## Mental Health Care Access

There is no doubt that the pandemic has greatly intensified feelings of stress and anxiety. A Kaiser Family Foundation study revealed troubling statistics: More than half of young adults ages 18-24 reported concerning symptoms, including contemplation of suicide. Among essential workers, 22% said they had seriously considered suicide within the past 30 days, and 42% acknowledged anxiety or depressive disorder.

The Lee Foundation has special empathy for the individuals and families experiencing such concerns. In partnership with the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation and The John R. Oishei Foundation, we took an important step to make mental health care more readily available in the community. Our grant supports two critical initiatives at the Erie County Medical Center.

**“My depression and mania had become so overwhelming that I was at a complete loss as to how to handle my life. If not for the Partial Hospitalization Program and the Intensive Outpatient Program, it’s very likely I would not be here today.”**

*IOP patient*



## Innovative Intensive Outpatient Program

The IOP creates a new alternative to inpatient mental health care. Using a model proven in other regions of the country, the program serves patients who need a higher level of care than traditional outpatient programs but do not require hospitalization. The IOP bridges the gap between inpatient and outpatient care, supporting patients through a gradual transition to the community while follow-up services are arranged.

The IOP employs a variety of treatment methods, tailoring medications and concentrated counseling services to the specific needs of the individual. Offered nowhere else in Western New York, it’s an intermediate level of care that may result in shorter hospital stays and fewer readmissions.

## More hours at the ECMC Help Center

Mental health crises don’t always occur within typical business hours. Because most community providers are closed during evenings and weekends, the only alternative is the emergency room. Foundation support allows ECMC’s Help Center to expand its hours from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. seven days a week.

The Center is a walk-in clinical service that provides patients with a short-term connection to long-term solutions appropriate for their level of need. Most crucial is the immediacy of care – for persons in distress, prompt attention in a non-hospital environment helps to prevent symptoms from escalating.

**“The Help Center was nothing short of finding water after years in the desert. The focus of everyone was on getting me to a better place. It was their profound kindness during my darkest hours that saved my life.”**

*Help Center patient*



# leadership.

## Mental Health Workforce Development

The extraordinary pressures of the pandemic have only exacerbated what was already a dire shortage of mental health care providers. In 2019, one in ten adults reported symptoms of anxiety and depression; by 2020 that number had multiplied to four in ten. Yet one-third of Americans live in areas lacking mental health professionals and half of U.S. counties have no psychiatrist at all. Nearly 6,400 more psychiatrists would have to be added to accommodate their needs.

Training new practitioners is just one strategy the Lee Foundation has employed to address dramatically growing demand. In 2021, we commissioned a policy paper through our partnership with Think Bigger Do Good. The authors identified primary care physicians as a valuable but often overlooked source of mental health treatment. Building on their recommendations, we funded three innovative programs to encourage partnerships between mental health providers and family physicians, strengthen primary care capabilities, and support integrated care. The Foundation also awarded a grant to promote professional development opportunities and retention efforts.

**Because most people access care through family physicians, primary care practices are an ideal source for initial mental health screening and assessment.**



## Primary care staff training at Horizon Health

A grant to Horizon Health supplies instruction and ongoing assistance to two primary care offices. The knowledge gained enables staff members to identify patients who may need mental health services. They can then determine the appropriate type and level of care, expedite access to treatment through Horizon or other providers, and ensure continuity of care through communication and collaboration.

## Value Network training series

As fatigue and burnout worsened during the pandemic, so did turnover. With a grant from the Lee Foundation, the Value Network is presenting a training series aimed at improving staff retention by increasing skills, relieving stress, and promoting wellness among mental health professionals. It is expected that 100 practitioners from 21 agencies will not only earn valuable Continuing Education Units (CEUs) but also form a peer network to exchange information and experience.



## Upstate Medical University training for family physicians

Upstate's intensive workshops enhance the ability of primary and family medicine physicians to address mild to moderate mental health disorders. Through the Project ECHO virtual community, practitioners across the region receive support from their peers, while Upstate's mental health experts provide mentoring, convey knowledge, and share best practices. Patient benefits include quicker treatment from their own doctors, and referrals to more specialized resources when necessary.

## New clinical psychology fellowship at RIT

With funding from the Lee Foundation, Rochester Institute of Technology has instituted a new postdoctoral fellowship in clinical psychology. Aimed at alleviating the shortage of mental health and addiction counselors in the Rochester area, the fellowship focuses on integrating behavioral health treatment into primary care offices and training practitioners to conduct screenings and assessments. The collaboration between primary doctors and clinical psychologists should enable more timely intervention for patients who require mental health services.

# impact.

## STEM Education

Educating students in STEM disciplines – science, technology, engineering and math – is not only more important than ever, it is also more expensive. Since 2010, the Foundation has awarded scholarships to juniors and seniors whose family income often precludes their receiving sufficient financial aid. The positive impact of Lee scholarships on their ability to pursue careers in these essential fields is significant.

In 2021, we increased the number of Lee Scholars from four to ten each at Rochester Institute of Technology and University of Rochester. We also added two new academic partners – Syracuse University with four scholarships and Monroe Community College with three. Like our successful programs at SUNY Erie and Niagara County Community College, MCC's will support scholars in their second year of study. In all, 64 STEM students received Lee Foundation support in 2021.

**“I want to thank the Lee Foundation for recognizing me and my fellow scholars for our hard work. The incredible people I’ve met inspire me to work even harder. I’m so proud and happy to be part of this network.”**

*Madeline Zautner, St. Louis University, '22*



## Chiara Santina Dueñas *2021 Distinguished Lee Scholar*

For Chiara and the Lee Foundation, the selection process worked both ways. Before applying to be a Lee Scholar as a junior at RIT, she surveyed our website and “felt a connection” with our mission. The Foundation was “looking for philanthropically minded engineers,” she recalls, “and that spoke to me.”

Chiara does, indeed, prioritize service. While an undergraduate, she included a three-week trip to repair medical equipment in Guatemala among her many volunteer efforts. She received a B.S. in biomedical engineering in May 2021, and is now studying for an M.E. in engineering management, also at RIT.

“Engineering is a magical match between science and math,” Chiara believes. Her “deep passion for the human body and physiology” explains her interest in biomedical engineering.

“I am so thankful” for the Lee Foundation’s support, Chiara says. The Distinguished Lee Scholar Award funding will eliminate her qualified student loans, and “the impact on me and my family is life-changing!”



## Anthony Burroughs, **A.A.S.** *Electrical Engineering Science, MCC, '22*

It’s hard to imagine a student more determined than Anthony. When he graduates from Monroe Community College, it will be with his second two-year degree. He was 25 when he began work on his first, in automotive industries technology, which led to four years as a maintenance technician with Toyota. But his “lifelong dream” was to be an engineer. So, with the support of his wife, Anthony left his job to pursue that dream full time.

Thanks to his Lee Foundation scholarship, Anthony says, “I can breathe. It allows me to focus on school with a clear head – without the financial burden – and get the best grades possible. I am profoundly grateful.” And it’s especially welcome since he and his wife had a baby girl in March.

Anthony’s next step will take him to RIT to complete his bachelor’s degree. As for his eventual career, he’s open to new possibilities. “Automotive is my first love,” he says, “but the more I learn about electrical engineering and what can be done – I realize there are lots of things I’m interested in.”

# advocacy.

## Think Bigger Do Good

Our largest advocacy effort, TBDG expanded in both activity and reach during 2021. A series of five webinars attracted a total of 1,144 professionals from across the country. In addition to clinicians and hospitals, participants represented nonprofits, universities, law enforcement, philanthropy, health insurance, advocacy groups, and state and federal agencies.

To date, TBDG has commissioned 26 policy papers written by nationally recognized mental health experts and thought leaders. The five papers published in 2021 addressed issues ranging from inadequate housing options for people living with serious mental illness to the shortage of qualified mental health care professionals. A treatise on shifting crisis interventions from police departments to mental health professionals was especially timely. TBDG is a collaboration of the Lee Foundation, Peg's Foundation, Peter & Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, and Thomas Scattergood Foundation.

## WBFO's Mental Health Initiative

With funding from the Lee Foundation, Buffalo's public radio station reached a broader audience with increased activity during 2021. Thirty-one in-depth stories and news reports were published, covering a variety of topics aimed at encouraging and normalizing community conversations about mental health. Virtual events were held throughout the year to provide opportunities for community discussion on the most pressing issues including housing, students' mental health and the impact of COVID, and the intersection of mental health and policing.

## 2021 Community Investments

### *Advocacy*

Think Bigger Do Good

### *Covid-19 Response*

WNY Covid-19 Community Response Fund

### *Mental Health*

Buffalo City Mission

ECMC Foundation

Horizon Health

NAMI Buffalo and Erie County

Rochester Institute of Technology

University of Rochester

Upstate Foundation

Value Network

WNED/WBFO

### *Mental Health Scholarships*

D'Youville College

University at Buffalo Medical School

University of Rochester

University Psychiatric Practice

### *STEM Scholarships*

Distinguished Lee Scholar Award

Monroe Community College

Niagara County Community College

Rochester Institute of Technology

Saint Louis University

SUNY Erie

Syracuse University

University of Rochester



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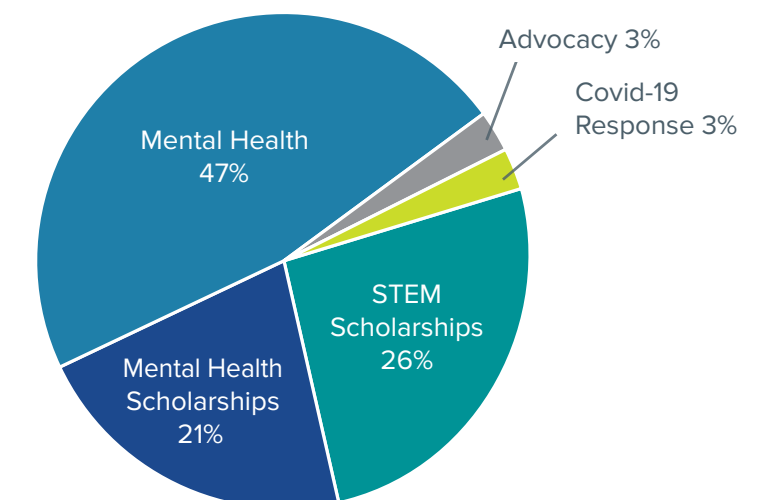
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