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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Russia and China proclaim ‘no limits’ partnership to stand up to U.S.

MOSCOW, Feb 4 (Reuters) - China and Russia proclaimed a deep strategic partnership on Friday to balance what they portrayed as the malign global influence of the United States as China’s President Xi Jinping hosted Russia’s Vladimir Putin on the opening day of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

In a joint statement, the two countries affirmed that their new relationship was superior to any political or military alliance of the Cold War era.

“Friendship between the two States has no limits, there are no ‘forbidden’ areas of cooperation,” they declared, announcing plans to collaborate in a host of areas including space, climate change, artificial intelligence and control of the internet.

The agreement marked the most detailed and assertive statement of Russian and Chinese resolve to work together - and against the United States - to build a new international order based on their own interpretations of human rights and democracy.

The statement was steeped in ideological discourse and it was not clear whether it would immediately translate into an increase in tangible and practical cooperation - although Putin trumpeted a new gas deal with China on Friday - or was intended as more of a statement of general policy intent.

The United States responded coolly. Asked about the meeting between Xi and Putin, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said President Joe Biden has his own relationship with China.

Referring to a massing of Russian troops near the Ukraine border, she said the U.S. focus is currently on working with partners in case Russia invades Ukraine, adding “we’ve also conveyed that destabilizing conflict in Europe would impact China’s interests all over the world.”

Daniel Russel of the Asia Society think tank, who served as the U.S. State Department’s top diplomat for East Asia in the Obama administration, said Xi and Putin were “announcing their determination to stand together and to stand against the U.S. and the West — ready to withstand sanctions and contest American global leadership”.

While not formally allied, the two “are



making common cause as a tactical matter to better defend their respective interests and their authoritarian systems from Western pressure”, he said.

Jonathan Eyal of the London-based Royal United Services Institute said the declaration marked a “frontal rebuttal” of the U.S. and Western view of the world and a possible building block towards a military alliance.

“They both feel cornered and they feel their moment has arrived to state their vision of the world and promote it aggressively.”

MUTUAL SUPPORT

The two countries have moved closer together as both have come under pressure from the West on issues including their human rights records and Russia’s military build-up near Ukraine. The timing of their announcement was highly symbolic, at a China-hosted Olympics that the United States has subjected to a diplomatic boycott.

In the lengthy document - nearly 5,400 words in English translation - each went significantly further than before in back-

ing the other on flashpoints of tension with the West.

The two countries expressed concern about “the advancement of U.S. plans to develop global missile defence and deploy its elements in various regions of the world, combined with capacity building of high-precision non-nuclear weapons for disarming strikes and other strategic objectives”.

Elsewhere, without naming Washington, they criticised attempts by “certain states” to establish global hegemony, fan confrontation and impose their own standards of democracy.

Scott Kennedy, a China expert at Washington’s Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that despite the rhetoric, there would be limits to the alliance.

“China is willing to stand with Russia through thin but not thick. This collaboration works as long as it entails few costs. They are expanding their commercial ties, extolling a similar anti-American/pro-authoritarian narrative, and hoping their friendship weakens the West’s military position

in Europe and Asia,” he said, adding, “If a war breaks out over Ukraine or Taiwan, we can expect this partnership to fracture.”

TECH AND ENERGY

In the technology arena, Russia and China said they were ready to strengthen cooperation on artificial intelligence and information security.

They said they believed that “any attempts to limit their sovereign right to regulate national segments of the Internet and ensure their security are unacceptable”.

Meanwhile Russian state energy giants Gazprom and Rosneft on Friday agreed new gas and oil supply deals with Beijing worth tens of billions of dollars

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

01/31/2022



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Lunar New Year's Eve Meditation



Warm sparks of holiday spirit splashed all around in our television studio.

Houston's Mayor Sylvester Turner clenched his fists with passion and declared

that we are the most diverse ethnic community in the country, but we are still

all in the same family.

Congressman Al Green praised the Asian American community with so many great contributions to our nation.

Our brotherhood is as solid as a rock.

There was indeed a grand spring in a small studio.

So much beautiful music and dancing on the live stage.

Brother Tsai Yu wrote in his own words a song called, "Bellaire Street." It tells the story

of all of us.

It is so sad that the Covid-19 took away so many lives.

Today we try to keep the flame burning in our hearts.

Carrying a string of joy inside and yearning for our hometown.

Today we are singing in front of a live camera.

Let us shout out aloud together. We have no right to be pessimistic.

The world still belongs to us tomorrow.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Karina Safina and Luka Berulava of Georgia in action during the Figure Skating Pair Short Program. REUTERS/Toby Melville



Dr. Mayank Amin draws the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine at a clinic run by Skip-pack Pharmacy in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, March 7, 2021. REUTERS/Hannah Beier



Valeriia Pavlova of the Russian Olympic Committee celebrates their first goal scored by Ekaterina Dobrodeeva of the Russian Olympic Committee against Switzerland during Women's Ice Hockey Prelim. REUTERS/Brian Snyder



Lin Jiaxin of China in action with Amanda Refsgaard of Denmark during Women's Ice Hockey Prelim. REUTERS/David W Cerny



The Dixie Fire, now over 200,000 acres, burns at night in Taylorsville, California, July 27, 2021. REUTERS/David Swanson



A person reacts after the verdict in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, found guilty of the death of George Floyd, in front of Hennepin County Government Center, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 20, 2021. REUTERS/Carlos... MORE

Covid Crisis On Campus

How Colleges Are Dealing With High-COVID Case Counts On Campus

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Cases of COVID-19 on college campuses are on the rise across the country. In the first week of spring semester, the University of Georgia reported nearly 1,000 positive cases, more than any week so far in the pandemic. At Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, the last 7 days saw 1,196 confirmed cases. At Penn State University, the positive case count hit a 12-month high.

Cases are spiking on college campuses because, despite the rapid spread of the omicron variant, most schools are beginning their spring semesters in-person. Just 14% of colleges are beginning the semester online, according to new data from the College Crisis Initiative. This time last year, before there were vaccines, about 40% of colleges started online.

"You feel the stress on campus," says Aisha Ghorashian, a senior at the University of Oregon.

Despite having a student body that is more than 96% vaccinated, her university logged 960 COVID-19 cases in the first week of January as students returned to campus. Ghorashian was one of them.

"People, I think, don't feel safe," she says. "You see that double masking and you see those N95s that I've never seen people wear before."

When NPR spoke with her, she was out of isolation – sporting a blue surgical mask as she sat in the law school building, students milling around behind her. Ghorashian is surprised that things seem to be, for the most part, business-as-usual. And she's not the only one.

"Across the board, the faculty, staff and students were shocked that we decided not to be online," Ghorashian says, "Even though the data showed that there is going to be a surge."



Rising case counts puts pressure on campus

resources

In the past two years, colleges have worked non-stop to adapt to the pandemic and return to in-person classes safely. By the fall of 2021, more than 1,100 campuses required vaccines and many more instituted indoor masking policies; the collective sense among schools was they'd cracked the code of living with COVID-19. Plus, colleges are some of the most vaccinated places in the country. By September 2021, 74% of college students had received one dose of the vaccine – compared to 54% of the general population in that same month, according to a study by the COVID States Project. But still, the omicron variant has taken campuses by storm.

"It's a crisis," says Gerri Taylor, co-leader of the COVID Task Force for the American College Health Association. "I think the numbers we're hearing about are, at this point, underreported."

Taylor says the biggest worry for colleges is their capacity to handle "rapidly increasing" case numbers.

"In trying to isolate [students], they need resources in terms of housing, staffing to track them," says Taylor. "They need staff to test them and to record all that ... to have a sense of how many kids on campus are sick."

You feel the stress on campus ... people, I think, don't feel safe ... you see that double masking and you see those N95s that I've never seen people wear before.

A big part of Taylor's job is to work with health directors on campus to coordinate their COVID response. One campus director recently told her: "We have never, through even this entire pandemic, been in a situation as difficult as this one right now in January of 2022."

Colleges are deploying emergency measures as they scramble to deal with the surge in cases. Some schools are using hotels to house students who test positive. At California Polytechnic State University, students who test positive are offered a \$400 gift card to the campus store if they move home to isolate.

Students are in limbo as they anxiously watch case counts go up

For students, there's a lot of uncertainty around how this semester will pan out. Senior Sophia Kriz is back on campus at Dartmouth College. The school is requiring all students to get a booster shot by the end of this month. It also implemented weekly testing and moved most of the social activities online, although classes remain in-person.

Even with all those precautions, Kriz is worried the high numbers of positive cases on campus could shut it all down.



"It sort of feels like we're in a state of limbo," she says, "We're all on campus, but you know, we're all just sort of waiting to hear...how things are going..."

Kriz is in the middle of planning rush for her sorority. They know the first round of recruitment events will be virtual, but beyond that, it's all up in the air. So, they're planning for two alternate universes – one where their social life stays virtual, and one where omicron eases up. For Kriz, a lot of things in the near future are laced with that same uncertainty. As she dives into her final semester of college, Kriz is just glad to be on campus and getting as close to a typical senior year as possible.

"All I can do from there is just hope that, you know, things get a little more normal," she says. (Courtesy npr.org)

Related

Colleges with high vaccination rates must now decide if they'll require boosters

This week, Wesleyan University in Connecticut held its first booster vaccine clinic on campus. CJ Joseph, a first-year student still figuring out what to major in, wasted no time signing up.

"I was like, 'Heck, yes, I will be the first person to get it' " says Joseph, who was one of the first students to get the shot at Wednesday's clinic at Beckham Hall.

Convenience was a major selling point. "I have a lot of work to do," Joseph explains. "Being able to walk like a good four minutes just to get my COVID vaccine made it so much easier for me and I didn't have to spend money to get an Uber to go over to Walgreens or to CVS."

The liberal arts campus, which serves about 3,000 students, will require COVID-19 booster shots for those on campus this spring. It is one of the first colleges to do so.



A nurse administers a dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine during a City of Long Beach Public Health mobile vaccination clinic at the California State University, Long Beach campus. Patrick T. Fallon/AFP via Getty Images

"There's no good reason to hesitate," says Michael

Roth, the president of Wesleyan University. "Some people don't like to be first. But in this case, being first for public health doesn't seem to be a particularly risky place to be."

More than 1,000 colleges across the country required COVID-19 vaccines for students and staff this year, according to data from the Chronicle of Higher Education.

With the CDC recommendation that all adults get booster shots, colleges now must weigh how to incorporate the additional dose into their pandemic response plans.

For now, many schools are simply encouraging students and staff to get the extra dose. Among them are Duke University, an early adopter of a campus vaccine mandate last spring. Rutgers, largely cited as the first U.S. university to require COVID-19 vaccinations, issued a statement saying "we have no impending plans to require boosters for any community member." But administrators are encouraging "everyone to take advantage of booster shots as a way of increasing their personal protection against the virus."



For one small college, a booster requirement was an easy decision

At Wesleyan, Roth says there were some colleagues who questioned making it a requirement, insisting that compliance would be high anyway among a student population that was already nearly all vaccinated. He says requiring the booster makes it a social norm rather than an individual decision.

"The majority of our people would have gotten the booster without the encouragement," he says, "but we want to get the rate up as high as possible."

He points to other vaccine requirements on the college campus, like meningitis and measles, mumps and rubella, noting that much of the ambivalence he sees comes from the politicization of the COVID-19 vaccine. "It just seemed like our obligation," he says.

Joseph, who is at high risk due to asthma, is grateful for that clear message.

"I really appreciate the fact that it is required that we get our booster shots," Joseph says, "because I feel like there are people who kind of view next step shots as a 'Oh, whatever. I don't really have to get it.'"

The mandate, Joseph says, plus the ease of access, makes the campus feel safer.

About an hour after Joseph got the booster, Hallie Stenberg, a junior studying history and French, waited in line to get hers. She saw friends in line; she caught up with them to talk about Thanksgiving break and the upcoming needle they were

bracing for.



"People are excited and ready to have it over with," she said after she'd gotten the shot. "Everyone's like, 'I'm just going to manifest that I will not be sick [with side effects] because we don't have time. We have finals.' I have presentations next week and papers to do the week after that, so I'm just trying to get it out of the way."

Will more campuses require a booster shot?

One question that colleges and universities still need to answer is, will the CDC update the definition of what "fully vaccinated" means, given that boosters are now encouraged for all adults? "Fully vaccinated, that term is extremely important to determine what that means for the community," explains Gerri Taylor, co-chair of the American College Health Association's COVID-19 task force. "If, in fact, the CDC says that fully vaccinated means having a booster within six months of getting your vaccine, as an example, then the colleges may put that into their requirements."

Her organization will issue guidance to colleges once that happens, but in the meantime, she recommends that colleges set up booster clinics on campus and encourage their communities to get an extra shot.

"Colleges are well prepared to do boosters," she says. They "have a captive population, and the stakes are there: We want students to be back in school and we've heard that over and over from the American Academy of Pediatrics and from students."



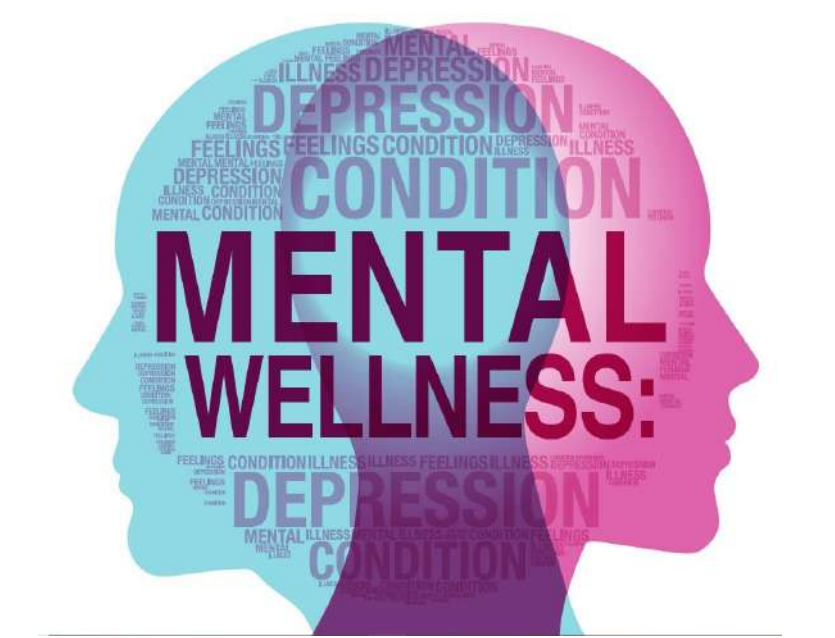
She points to two complicating factors: staffing and timing. A recent survey by the American College Health Association found the top two concerns for college health centers were staffing and burnout, because of the intensity and the duration of the pandemic.

When it comes to timing, there's not much left of the fall semester before finals and winter break.

"Timing is so critical and has been throughout this pandemic," says Taylor. "So, do you start a booster clinic now? Or do you do it in January or February when students return for this spring semester?"

Those, she says, are decisions colleges are making right now. (courtesy npr.org)

The Global Pandemic Has Made Mental Well-Being A Public Health Priority



Key Points

With mental health symptoms surging during the pandemic, nurturing mental wellness has become a collective social responsibility.

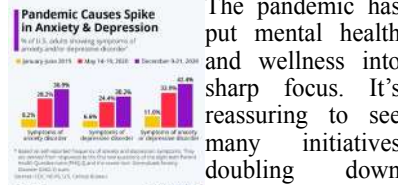
- Early diagnosis and self-care can help manage the progression of mental illnesses and reduce healthcare costs.
- Great self-care means expanding the range of mental-health services available to the public.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

With the psychological impact of the pandemic likely to linger for years, self-care is not a luxury but a public health necessity. Focusing on mental wellness is a collective social responsibility. As third and fourth waves of COVID-19 surge in some parts of the world, highly vaccinated countries are cautiously reopening, breathing more freely, hopeful in early indications that inoculation will keep virus and variants under control. As we look ahead, we must also find solutions to supporting and improving mental health.

During the pandemic, nearly half of US adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, a figure that has been largely consistent, up from one in 10 who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019. In France, cases of depression doubled. We can see similar mental health

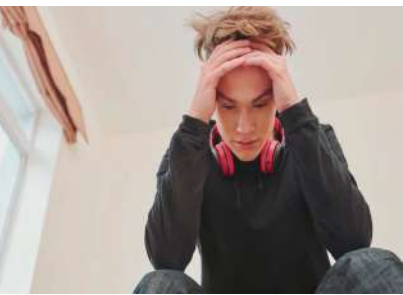
concerns growing worldwide. It's disproportionately affecting young adults, people of color and essential workers, even people without prior mental health disorders. Lockdowns have also limited access to mental health services, creating backlogs in care. Not to mention the remote working lifestyle we have been in for more than a year now, which often creates feeling of being disconnected from colleagues, even when connected technologically to them.



The pandemic has put mental health and wellness into sharp focus. It's reassuring to see many initiatives doubling down

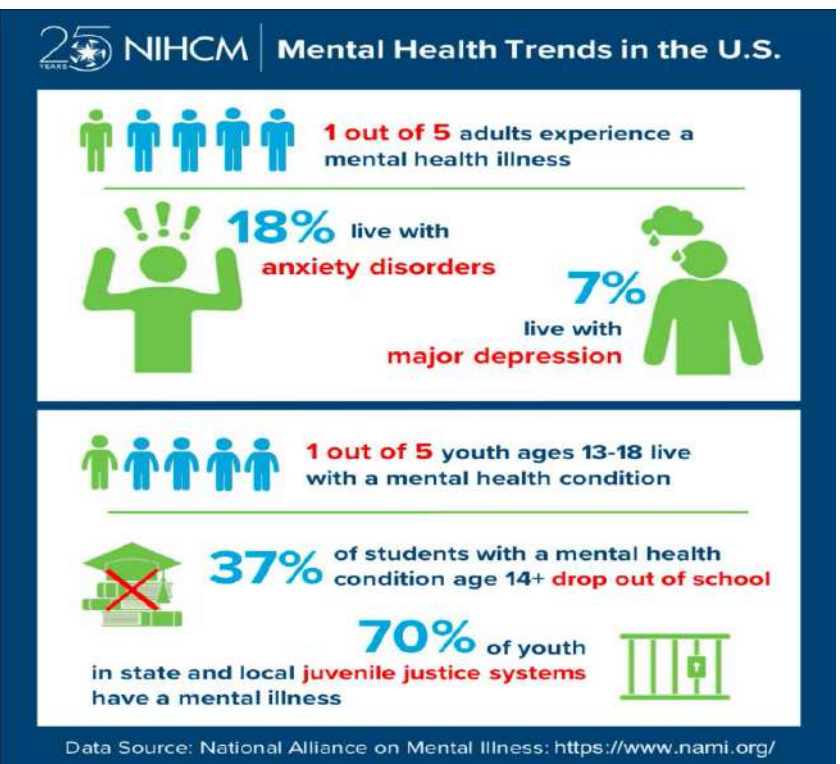
on mental-health awareness now: the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the UK's Royal Family and the Global Self-Care Federation are just a few among many others that have championed it as a priority and have undertaken large-scale public service campaigns to destigmatize symptoms and raise awareness of available solutions. Taking care of mental health is good for individuals and good for public health systems in the future, as early intervention and prevention helps keep many people out of more burdensome clinical settings.

Insomnia is one example that comes to mind, a condition that has grown upwards of an estimated 20% since the pandemic. By working closely with healthcare communities, we can help raise awareness of insomnia's repercussions on overall mental and physical wellness. Over-the-counter medicines can help support people in their management of early sleep issues.



Non-medical solutions also exist: for example, Music Care, a research and digital program for patient care through music, has been clinically proven to naturally reduce both alertness and the need for sedation among hospital patients, decreasing heart rate and respiratory rate, promoting relaxation and sleep.

There's much more we can do with the mental health community to support improved sleep as just one small part of the solution. The pandemic has spurred many people to pay better attention to their health with increased everyday physical activity for some, and for others, an improved diet with more home-cooked meals. Yet we know good habits are sometimes hard to keep up: According to one study, 70% of adults under 40 say they believe they are performing sufficient self-care, but just over half of their doctors and pharmacists say their patients aren't doing enough. We can close this gap with better preventive mental wellness efforts and more self-care, areas that had already begun to gain attention even before the pandemic.



Beyond raising awareness about mental health, it's about taking concrete action and correspondingly providing appropriate resourcing and building a supportive ecosystem. During the World Health Assembly in May, WHO officials called worsened mental health worldwide from COVID-19 a "mass trauma" and consequently adopted a decision endorsing an update to the WHO's Mental Health Action Plan: It will include forums on suicide prevention, workplace mental health, universal health coverage, mental health of children, mental health across the life course, and the involvement of people with lived experience of mental health conditions.

More self-care is also about improved access to health services for the broader population. Due to the accelerated digital transformation hastened by the pandemic, internet platforms have become key levers for empowered self-care. There, people can find out more about their health conditions, including mental wellness-related ones, seek support, assess options and get solutions. Incredibly accessible, putting information literally at your fingertips, these new channels provide people with the opportunity to manage their health – to self-care – in a more effective way, without taking away resources from the frontline. The development of teleconsultation in medicine, the evolution of click and collect and home delivery by e-pharmacies is

putting the pharmacist at the centre of population health, more and more playing the role of health counsellor.



Today, there is a need to extend these services to people experiencing mental health problems, especially when pharmacists are likely to be their first point of contact. Pharmacists have a significant role to play if we make mental health for all a global reality. That said, not all mental wellness can be managed with self-care alone; but multiple studies have shown that screening and early professional intervention will prevent more severe conditions from setting in following major trauma. Individuals can be their own strongest advocates, with governments, industry and patient groups each playing a role in strengthening true consumer literacy in this field. Not only is it important to recognize mental health risks, but we also need to stay in tune to identifying symptoms, take courageous steps to self-care, and engage with the right solutions. Together, we can solve the mental health challenges we'll still face even after COVID-19 is under control. (Courtesy weforum.org)