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**Patrick J. Kennedy to Keynote Spokane Community Health Forum**

**Spokane, Wash. / January 31, 2018** – Providence Health Care and Eastern Washington University will present ‘Making Mental Health Essential Health’ Wednesday, January 31, 2018 from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. at the Spokane Convention Center.

Patrick J. Kennedy, former Rhode Island Congressman and international advocate for parity in mental health and substance use disorder treatment, will deliver the keynote address.

The community forum will discuss behavioral health and substance abuse issues and resources as related to the Spokane community, and will also include a panel of local experts.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit <https://www.ewu.edu/about/ewu-news/kennedy-forum> or <https://washington.providence.org/events/phc/mental-health-forum/>.

The Community Health Forum is an annual event and community discussion of health-related topics of importance to the Spokane community presented by Providence Health Care and Eastern Washington University, with support from Empire Health Foundation and Kaiser Permanente.

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About Patrick J. Kennedy: Former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy (D-R.I.) is a lifelong mental health advocate and member of the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. He is the founder of The Kennedy Forum, a convening think tank tackling mental health and addiction issues and co-founder of One Mind, a global leader in open science collaboration for brain research. In 2015, he co-authored *A Common Struggle*, a New York Times best seller, which details his personal journey and provides a roadmap for the future of mental health policy. Mr. Kennedy is pushing for full enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. He was the lead sponsor of this groundbreaking legislation, which requires health plans cover mental health, eating disorder, and addiction care health benefits the same way they cover physical health benefits. To learn about Mr. Kennedy’s efforts, please visit [www.patrickjkennedy.net](http://www.patrickjkennedy.net).