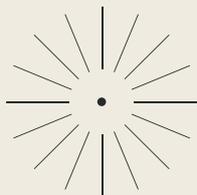




BBF Stakeholder Meeting

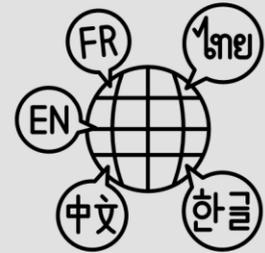


On December 13, 2025, the Biya Belayneh Foundation (BBF) convened families, clinicians, faith leaders, advocates, and community stakeholders in Silver Spring, MD, to address urgent mental health and substance abuse challenges impacting Ethiopian and Eritrean communities. The discussion centered on collaboration, cultural understanding, and practical solutions.

Key Takeaways & Action Priorities

Language Access & Family Support

Families need culturally and linguistically appropriate tools to understand mental illness, recognize crisis warning signs, and advocate effectively. BBF will expand resources in Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrinya, crisis-language guides, and education on conditions such as anosognosia, while promoting the appropriate use of 988.



Youth Prevention & Early Intervention



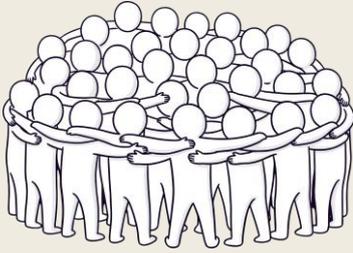
Youth face heightened risk due to migration stress, bullying, cannabis exposure, and excessive screen time. BBF will develop a youth mental wellness curriculum focused on emotional literacy, neurodiversity, brain health, and digital hygiene.

Faith & Cultural Reframing

Mental illness is often misunderstood as a spiritual or moral issue. BBF will partner with faith institutions to reframe mental illness as a medical condition and promote prayer as a complement—not a substitute—for treatment.



Community Support & Peer Engagement



Families feel isolated and burned out. BBF will expand culturally relevant, peer-led support groups and healing spaces that normalize open conversations about distress and suicide.

Crisis Response & Advocacy

People with mental illness are significantly overrepresented in fatal police encounters. BBF will advocate for culturally responsive Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and promote non-police crisis response models.



Communications & Resources



BBF will launch a quarterly newsletter, strengthen its media presence, share educational content online, and update its provider directory to include culturally competent and uninsured care options.

Call to Action: Join the Movement

We cannot do this work alone. BBF invites you to take action:

- **Families:** Share your experiences and help shape family-centered tools
- **Clinicians & Providers:** Join our culturally competent provider network
- **Faith Leaders:** Partner with us to bring mental health education into places of worship
- **Youth & Educators:** Collaborate on prevention and early-intervention initiatives
- **Volunteers & Translators:** Help expand Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Tigrinya resources
- **Advocates & Donors:** Support policy reform, education, and community programs

Upcoming Event

On January 31, 2026, the Biya Belayneh Foundation for Mental Health will participate in a mental health Stakeholders meeting in Los Angeles, in collaboration with the African Communities Public Health Coalition(ACPHC). The coalition is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to improving health and well-being in African and African-descendant communities through culturally grounded public health work.

Get involved: Contact BBF to volunteer, partner, or support our initiatives

Stay connected: Subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on social media
Together, we can replace stigma with understanding, isolation with support, and silence with hope.

— *The Biya Belayneh Foundation for Mental Health, BBFoundationmh.org*