



COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

Board of County Commissioners
News Release

330 West Church Street
Drawer CA04 • PO Box 9005
Bartow, Florida 33831-9005
Phone: 863-534-6090
www.polk-county.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Lengyel, Communications Specialist
(863) 534-6083 (office) (863) 232-9515 (cell)

Polk County Commission holds Behavioral Health Symposium

Bartow, Fla. (September 17, 2018) — The Polk County Board of County Commissioners will host The Behavioral Health Symposium on Thursday, Sept. 20, the event will feature Pete Early, a storyteller who has penned 17 books, four of them *New York Times* bestsellers, including [Crazy: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness](#).

The purpose of the symposium is to take a look at 2-1-1, free community resource information and referral, the Polk Sheriff's Office 9-1-1 Call Center and Peace River Center, a local behavioral health crisis line aims to create awareness around points of access for Behavioral Health Services in Polk.

"Behavioral Healthcare is an area of great concern in our nation, including Polk County. It is imperative that our constituents know how to access care and more importantly are able to access care," said Commissioner Melony Bell.

The Polk County Board of County Commissioners cordially invites you to participate in a symposium as it concerns Polk County from an access, navigation, and systematic perspective. Join us Sept. 20, 2018 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Hollis Cancer Center Campisi Family Auditorium, 3525 Lakeland Hills Blvd. in Lakeland. To RSVP please visit <https://conta.cc/2C3Zj5h> or call (863-534-5203).

Speakers include Commissioner Melony Bell, Dr. Joy Jackson, Director of the Florida Department of Health Polk, Sheriff Grady Judd, Linda McKinnon, CEO Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Dr. E. Lee Washington, Aetna Medical Director, and Alan H. Turner III, President & CEO United Way of Central Florida.

More about Pete Early

After a 14-year career in journalism, including six years at *The Washington Post*, Pete became a full-time author with a commitment to expose the stories that entertain and surprise. When Pete's life was turned upside down by the events recounted in his book *Crazy*, he joined the National Alliance on Mental Illness to advocate for strong mental health reform on the public stage.

This new advocacy has taken him to 48 different states and multiple countries around the globe where he delivers speeches to rally against the troubled mental health systems and for the mentally ill.

###