

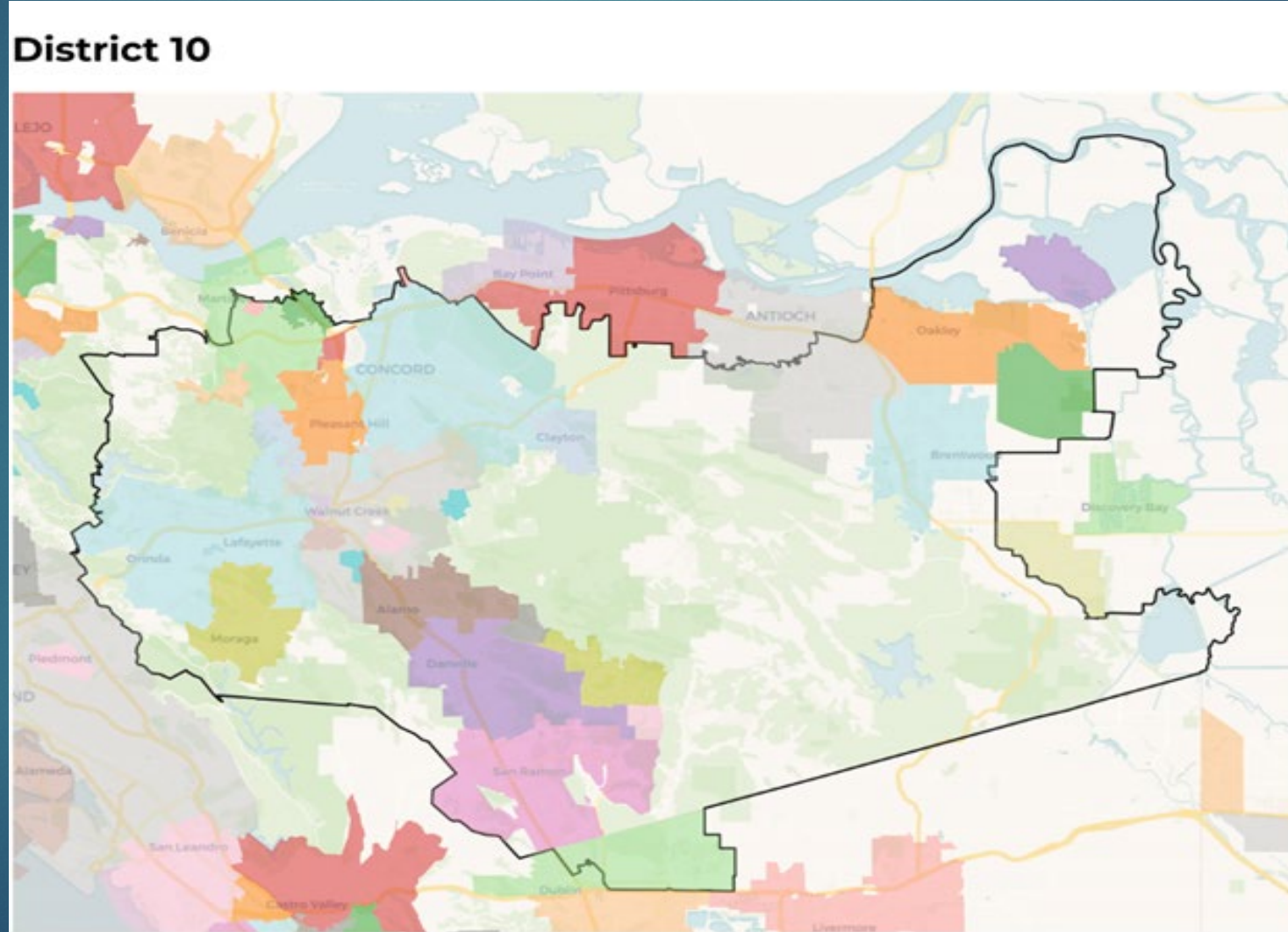
Mental Health: Social Media, Technology, and Addiction

with Special Guest Dr. Anna Lembke, MD

JUNE 28, 2023

California's 10th District

- ▶ Includes most of Contra Costa County and a part of Alameda County.



Office Performance Standards

- ▶ **Meeting Requests:** If you request a meeting, expect to receive a response within 24-hours.
- ▶ **Correspondence:** Emails and letters received in our office will be sent a response within 5 business days of receipt.
- ▶ **Casework:** Requests for assistance through our website or by phone will receive a response within 24-hours.
- ▶ **Tours & Flags:** Requests submitted through our website will receive a phone call within 24-hours.

Mark's Committee Assignments

- ▶ Committee on Education and the Workforce
 - ▶ Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions
 - ▶ Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
- ▶ Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
 - ▶ Subcommittee on Aviation
 - ▶ Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
 - ▶ Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
 - ▶ Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Committee on Ethics

The Rise of Social Media

- ▶ In the U.S., the average user spends **2 hours and 3 minutes per day** on social media platforms.
- ▶ Facebook is the most widely used social media platform in the world with nearly **3 billion monthly active users**.
- ▶ Over the last couple decades, social media use has expanded significantly. In 2005, only **5% of Americans** used any social media platform. In 2021, **72% of Americans** used social media.
- ▶ Children have particularly high rates of social media use.
 - ▶ About **92% of American teenagers** are active on social media.
 - ▶ In recent years, teenagers have become more likely to have access to technology that enables them to use social media. In 2022, **95% of teenagers in the U.S.** had access to a smartphone, up from 73% in 2014-2015.

Social Media and Misinformation

- ▶ Social media use can have benefits, including helping people to stay in touch with friends and family; learning about your interests and hobbies; and avenues for advertising businesses' products and services.
- ▶ However, social media has generally not proven to be a reliable source of accurate news.
 - ▶ **18% of Americans, and 48% of people aged 18-29** get their political news primarily through social media.
 - ▶ Just **17% of Americans** who get their political news primarily from social media have a high level of political knowledge, as measured by a Pew Research Center political knowledge quiz. In contrast, **45% of Americans** who get their political news primarily from a news website or app have a high level of political knowledge.
 - ▶ **Americans who get their political knowledge primarily on social media were more likely than consumers of other political news sources to have heard the conspiracy theory that the coronavirus pandemic was intentionally started by global elites.**

Social Media and Public Discourse

- ▶ Many members of the public and tech experts believe that social media is harmful to public discourse.
 - ▶ A 2019 poll found that over **60% of Americans** think that social media “wastes time” and “spreads unfair attacks and rumors.”
 - ▶ A 2020 poll of tech experts found that **49% of respondents** believe that technology will significantly weaken democracy.
- ▶ Louder voices can drown out others in discussions on social media. A study found that **15% of habitual news sharers were responsible for disseminating 30% to 40% of the misinformation** that exists on social media.
- ▶ Having discussions with others in person leads to greater mutual understanding and deeper connections. Discussions about controversial topics, especially over social media, can turn heated more quickly without the ability to build deeper relationships with others.

Emerging Threats in Technology

- ▶ Social media and other technology has allowed for **more rapid dissemination of misinformation** as it can spread widely before it can be vetted and disproven.
 - ▶ Fake verified accounts on Twitter, which increased after the company recently changed its rules for verification, have wreaked havoc, including causing some companies to lose billions of dollars in valuation after false tweets.
 - ▶ In early May 2023, a fake picture of an explosion at the Pentagon, which experts suggest may have been created by AI, circulated widely on social media. The image caused widespread panic and was reshared by verified Twitter accounts and Russian state media.
- ▶ Social media also offers new avenues for bad actors to engage in **social engineering, phishing, identity theft**, and other practices that threaten privacy and data security.

Social Media and Children

- ▶ **A range of studies have identified the troubling impact that social media can have on children's mental health.** It is critical to confront these impacts early, since unaddressed mental health issues in children can lead to negative outcomes later in life.
 - ▶ Students in 8th grade who use social media for 10 or more hours per week are **56% more likely to report being unhappy** than those who spend less time on social media.
 - ▶ Teenagers who spend three or more hours a day using electronic devices are **28% more likely to get less than seven hours of sleep** per night.
 - ▶ In 2021, **20.5% of female high school students** and **11.2% of male high school students** said they experienced cyberbullying.

Actions in Congress

- ▶ **Bots Research Act** – This bill would create a task force of experts at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to determine the impact of automated social media accounts, commonly known as "bots," on elections and public discourse.
- ▶ **Mental Health Matters Act** – Series of mental health policy priorities that would help support the behavioral health of students and school staff, strengthen school-based behavioral health care, and ensure access to mental health and substance use disorder benefits for workers and their families.
- ▶ **Funding for National Child Traumatic Stress Network** – This program, made up of over 250 centers and affiliates nationwide, provides screening and evidence-based treatment to approximately 60,000 children annually who have been exposed to traumatic events.
- ▶ Supported amendment to authorize NIH to **conduct independent research into the effects of technology and social media on children's cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development.**

Resources

- ▶ In early May 2023, the American Psychological Association issued a health advisory on the use of social media by children, offering ten recommendations on the issue.
 - ▶ <https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use>
- ▶ On May 23, 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on social media and youth mental health.
 - ▶ <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/youth-mental-health/social-media/index.html>
- ▶ Internet Matters, a nonprofit dedicated to helping parents keep their children safe online, has compiled resources for parents on social media safety.
 - ▶ <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/social-media-advice-hub2/>

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