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## JERSEY CITY HIGH SCHOOLERS GO INTO SUMMER BREAK WITH INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

*SciTech Scity's Healthcare Innovation Engine's latest pilot equips local students and administrators with digital mental wellness app Inner Peak*

**JERSEY CITY, NJ, JUNE 24, 2026** – As school winds down for summer break, some 350 high school students ages 14-18 throughout the Jersey City area are heading into vacation equipped with enhanced mental health awareness and ongoing digital support. Through the latest pilot program orchestrated by SciTech Scity's Healthcare Innovation Engine, these students and their school administrators have access to a specialized mental wellness platform created in collaboration with licensed therapists.

The app, Inner Peak, is available 24/7 to build coping skills, strengthen emotional regulation, and access stigma-free support. Students share their challenges and experiences in interactive journals, and get personalized reflection questions and nudges.

Students then receive customized support through real human therapist created videos and content. As they identify areas of life they want to improve on, they receive guided activities based on their individual wellness needs. Through these interactions, students engage with topics like the neuroscience of stress, behavioral science, and responsible AI use, all while gaining practical tools to manage stress in their lives and reduce future substance-misuse risk.

Inner Peak is an Ohio startup launched in 2023 and dedicated to providing affordable, real-time access to mental wellness support and psychological development for high-school and college students. It was co-founded by college friends Sean Wheelock and Ben Anandappa.

"At Inner Peak, we believe mental health support should be proactive, accessible, and integrated into everyday life – not something students only encounter during moments of crisis. Through this partnership, we're helping young people build practical skills for managing stress, navigating challenges, and developing resilience in ways that meet them where they are," said Sean Wheelock, Co-Founder and CEO of Inner Peak, who founded the company after experiencing his own struggles with mental health.

Wheelock added, "Our goal is to give students tools they can use every day, while helping schools identify opportunities to provide support earlier and more effectively. I started Inner Peak because I know firsthand how difficult it can be to navigate mental health challenges without the right support."

Innovative dashboards provide school-based mental health professionals visibility into student well-being trends, flagging early warning signs, providing insights into student concerns, and connecting students in crisis to appropriate resources while notifying staff and emergency contacts.

Delivered at a fraction of the cost of traditional therapy, the pilot program's organizers hope that the app will prove beneficial to students and administrators alike, ultimately making mental health support accessible to even more students.

The need for this type of care is significant. Nationally, one in five high school students have a mental or behavioral condition while four out of 10 report feelings of sadness and hopelessness according to a 2024 article published by Mental Health America. Perhaps more concerning, they found 10 percent of teens reported serious thoughts of suicide. And in the New Jersey Department of Education's 2023 Student Health Survey, one in three students in the state reported significant mental health struggles, ranging from anxiety to mood and behavioral disorders, with significant increases post-pandemic.

"The Healthcare Innovation Engine was built to close the gap between promising technology and real-world impact," said Paul Hoffman, President and CEO of Liberty Science Center, the organization spearheading the development of SciTech Scity. "Structured pilots such as this will show how emerging technologies can meaningfully improve outcomes within the complexity of actual healthcare and social systems – and ultimately help successful solutions scale across NJ and the rest of the country."

The Inner Peak pilot is funded through the Jersey City Department of Health & Human Services and the New Jersey State 2026 Opioid Settlement Grant. All participation is fully subsidized and delivered virtually, ensuring equitable access.

This new pilot is the latest launched and implemented by the Healthcare Innovation Engine, the first statewide platform for digital health adoption in the U.S. Launched by Liberty Science Center's SciTech Scity in February 2024, it was established as a unique public-private partnership dedicated to transforming healthcare by accelerating the adoption, reimbursement, and scaling of digital-first care solutions. Recently honored with the World Economic Forum's 2025 Public-Private Collaboration Award, the Engine's earlier pilots focused on enabling access to uninsured patients for cardiovascular health, oncology, post ER-care, and maternal health.

The Healthcare Innovation Engine is supported by a broad coalition of partners: EY, Bristol Myers Squibb, JPMorgan, RWJBarnabas Health, New Jersey Innovation Institute, Tech Council Ventures, Princeton University, Nokia Bell Labs, New Jersey Economic Development Authority, New Jersey Department of Human Services, New Jersey Department of Health, and Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services.

### **About Inner Peak**

Inner Peak is a digital mental wellness platform for middle and high school students, delivering trusted, 24/7 support and skill-building at scale to foster psychological growth and strengthen human connection. Learn more at [innerpeak.ai](https://innerpeak.ai).

### **About Liberty Science Center**

Liberty Science Center ([LSC.org](https://lsc.org)) is a 300,000-square-foot, not-for-profit learning center located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson near the Statue of Liberty. Dedicated to inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers and bringing the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology to learners of all ages, Liberty Science Center houses the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, 12 museum exhibition halls, a live animal collection with 110 species, giant aquariums, a 3D theater, live simulcast surgeries, a tornado-force wind simulator, K-12 classrooms and labs, and teacher-development programs. More than 280,000 students visit the Science Center each year, and tens of thousands more participate in the Center's off-site and online programs. Welcoming more than 800,000 visitors annually, LSC is the largest cultural institution in New Jersey and the largest interactive science center in the NYC-NJ metropolitan area.

### **About SciTech Scity & The Healthcare Innovation Engine**

Liberty Science Center is developing a "Science City of Tomorrow" in Jersey City—a 30-acre innovation campus called **SciTech Scity** devoted to using science and technology to address humanity's greatest challenges and

create a better future for all of us. The new campus, including the existing Liberty Science Center, will be officially named the Frank J. Guarini Innovation Campus and start to open in 2026.

Supported by seven Fortune 500 level companies, the new construction at SciTech Scity will include: **Liberty Science Center High School**, a world-class public STEM high school; **Edge Works**, an eight-story business creation center with laboratories, R&D spaces, office suites, co-working spaces, a tech exhibition gallery, and a state-of-the-art conference center; **Aviva Scholars Village** residential housing built and operated by Alpine Residential; and **Public Commons**, three acres of outdoor space for community activations.

The **Healthcare Innovation Engine**, SciTech Scity's flagship initiative, is the first statewide ecosystem in the country to accelerate digital health technology adoption. Recognized by the World Economic Forum with its 2025 Public-Private Collaboration Award, the Engine deploys patient pilots to translate promising new technologies into scalable solutions that improve health outcomes, advance equity, and reduce avoidable costs. Engine partners include public health officials, payors, providers, life sciences companies, innovative startups, and patient and community representatives.

Learn more at [SciTechScity.com](https://SciTechScity.com).