Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition
ROADMAP TO INCREASING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS

Behavioral health encompasses the full range of both mental health and substance use disorders. Unfortunately, the need for treatment continues to grow and a harmful stigma associated with these illnesses is compounding barriers to recovery. Maryland's governor and state legislators will have an opportunity and an obligation during the next term to enact policies that increase access to behavioral health treatment and services.

The Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition, a diverse mix of more than fifty non-governmental, non-profit organizations, has set forth the following policy goals that outline a roadmap to improving behavioral health outcomes for Marylanders of all ages. We hope you will join us in our vision to provide Marylanders – regardless of their health plan or financial situation – with access to high quality behavioral health treatment for mental health and substance use disorders.

Support our behavioral health workforce

Demand for treatment continues to grow for both mental health and substance use disorders. Maryland needs a robust workforce of behavioral health professionals to meet this growing demand. In 2017, the General Assembly passed the HOPE Act, establishing several years of much-needed provider rate increases. **We ask our leaders to stand firm on the HOPE Act commitment in future years and support our workforce with the resources and tools necessary to treat all Marylanders in need.**

Expand access to treatment

Behavioral health emergency room visits rose more than 18 percent between 2013 and 2016, and opioid-related overdose deaths rose nearly 300 percent between 2013 and 2017. At the same time, Maryland is among the worst states for access to affordable in-network behavioral health care, resulting in higher out-of-pocket costs that can make treatment unaffordable, even for those with insurance. We must offer more ways to receive critical treatment – such as walk-in and mobile crisis programs and telehealth services – and ensure provider networks are adequate and accessible to those in need. Further, we must enforce federal parity laws to reduce health insurance barriers that prevent access to behavioral health services. **We ask that you support continued efforts to ensure access to treatment through an expansion of crisis, telehealth and other community services and through the appropriate enforcement of existing laws.**

Improve our children's system of care

One in five youth face a behavioral health diagnosis during childhood, and Maryland's behavioral health system for children has reached a crisis point. A full continuum of care for youth begins with easy to access outpatient services in their communities. Integration of behavioral health supports in schools brings those services directly to the child, creating a safe and supportive environment that improves student outcomes. **As the state prepares to adopt recommendations of the Kirwan Commission, we ask that you support expansion of school-based behavioral health services.**

Increase system accountability to improve patient outcomes

Robust measurement of outcomes ensures that consumers receive quality behavioral health services and that policy decisions are informed by data. Health care financing models that include shared savings, performance payments and other risk-sharing methodologies improve quality of care and increase the likelihood of recovery. **We ask that you support a modernization of Maryland's behavioral health system that ties value-based provider payment to increased patient-centered outcomes measurement.**

We ask that you support our priority goals listed above. More than 50 organizations make up the Behavioral Health Coalition and we stand ready to work with you to increase access to behavioral health treatment. With your help, we can Keep the Door Open for over one million Marylanders and their families that are affected by a mental health or substance use disorder. Please Contact Dan Martin, Mental Health Association of Maryland, at 410-978-8865 or dmartin@mhamd.org for more information.

Coalition Member Organizations

- Adventist HealthCare Behavioral Health & Wellness Services
- Arundel Lodge
- Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate
- Baltimore Crisis Response
- Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
- Baltimore Jewish Council
- Behavioral Health System Baltimore
- Catholic Charities of Baltimore, Child and Family Services Division
- Center for Addiction Medicine
- Chesapeake Voyagers
- Children's Guild
- Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland
- Cornerstone Montgomery County
- Disability Rights Maryland
- EveryMind
- Family and Children's Services
- Family Services, Inc.
- Good Samaritan Hospital Division of Psychiatry
- Harford–Belair Community Mental Health Center
- Health Care for the Homeless
- Healthy Harford
- Jewish Community Services
- Key Point Health Services
- Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland
- Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence
- Maryland Association of Behavioral Health Authorities
- Maryland Association for Partial Hospital and Intensive Outpatient Programs
- Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth
- Maryland Behavioral Health Network
- Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition
- Maryland Coalition of Families
- Maryland & DC Society of Addiction Medicine
- Maryland Hospital Association
- Maryland Nonprofits
- Maryland Nurses Association
- Maryland Occupational Therapy Association
- Maryland Public Health Association
- Maryland Psychiatric Society
- Maryland Psychological Association
- Mental Health Association in Talbot County
- Mental Health Association of Frederick County
- Mental Health Association of Maryland
- Mid Shore Behavioral Health
- NAMI Maryland
- NAMI Metro Baltimore
- National Association of Social Workers Maryland Chapter
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) Maryland
- On Our Own of Maryland
- Pro Bono Counseling Project
- Prologue
- Sheppard Pratt Health System
- Way Station