



Mental Health  
Association of Maryland

# Virtual Legislative Briefing

FEBRUARY 22, 2021  
3:00-5:00 PM

# Schedule of Events

## INTRODUCTIONS

**Beth Sammis:** Vice President for Government Affairs, MHAMD

**Linda Raines:** Chief Executive Officer, MHAMD

## AWARDS PRESENTATION

### LIFETIME DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

**Linda Raines:** Chief Executive Officer, MHAMD

**Herb Cromwell:** Former Executive Director, Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland

**Mike Finkle:** Awardee

### PAULA U. HAMBURGER CHILD ADVOCACY AWARD

**Linda Raines:** Chief Executive Officer, MHAMD

**Shannon Hall:** Executive Director, Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland

**Larry Epp:** Awardee

### LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Dan Martin:** Senior Director of Public Policy, MHAMD

**Senator Malcolm Augustine:** Awardee

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

**Dr. Aliya Jones:** Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health

## LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BUDGET

**Senator Guy Guzzone:** Chair of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

### HEALTH EQUITY

**Senator Mary Washington:** Commission on Health Equity (SB 52/HB 78)

**Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk:** Implicit Bias Training (HB 28/SB 5) and Race and Ethnicity Data Collection (HB 309/SB 565)

**Delegate Sandy Rosenberg:** Prohibition on Fees for Records Needed to Secure Public Benefits (HB 849)

### TELEHEALTH

**Delegate Heather Bagnall:** Coverage for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Telehealth Benefits (HB 552/SB 393)

**Delegate Ariana Kelly:** Telehealth for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) (HB 191/SB 56)

## **OVERDOSE AND SUICIDE PREVENTION**

**Senator Shelly Hettleman:** Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program (SB 279/HB 396)

**Senator Addie Eckardt:** Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee (SB 168/HB 209)

**Delegate Karen Lewis Young:** Suicide Treatment Improvements Act (HB 442/SB 557)

## **CRISIS SERVICES**

**Senator Malcolm Augustine:** Expansion of Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services Grant Program (SB 286/HB 108)

## **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

**Senator Kathy Klausmeier:** Children's Behavioral Health Data Collection (SB 520/HB 1243)

**Delegate Kris Valderrama:** Time to Care Act of 2021 (HB 375/SB 211)

## **OLDER ADULTS**

**Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes:** Residential Service Agency Training Requirements (HB 141/SB 275) and Cognitive Impairment Public Health Outreach Materials (HB 119/SB 313)

# Paula U. Hamburger Child Advocacy Award

**Larry Epp, EdD, LCPC**

*Sheppard Pratt, Director of  
School Mental Health Services*

For over twenty-five years **Larry Epp** has been a passionate teacher, clinician and social justice advocate, leading efforts to remove barriers to student achievement by expanding trauma-informed, school-based mental health services. Early in his long and rich career, Mr. Epp worked with our nation's most vulnerable youth as a teacher at East Baltimore's Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. Those early experiences galvanized his commitment to help students achieve their full potential despite obstacles and challenges. Over the past 14 years, he has served as the Director of School Mental Health Services for the Sheppard Pratt Health System, led the Montgomery County Linkages to Learning public-private partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools, and later worked to replicate the program in Prince George's County. His leadership led to the expansion of youth crisis services in Montgomery County and the creation of two important programs: Care and Connection for Families and the Youth First Care Program.

A focus on outcome-informed care has been a constant throughout Larry's many years of service, and he has played a central role in developing the outcome measurement system that the Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland is working to implement across the state. He has served as President of the DC and Maryland Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors Associations and the Maryland Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, among other volunteer roles. Mr. Epp has been recognized with countless awards and accolades including Montgomery County's Nancy Dworkin Award for Outstanding Service to Youth, the American Counseling Association's O'Hana National Advocacy Award, and, most recently, the Paula U. Hamburger Child Advocacy Award.

# Legislator of the Year Award

## Senator Malcom Augustine

*District 47, Prince George's County*

**Malcolm Augustine** is recognized as Legislator of the Year for his leadership in the passage of two critically important bills to expand access to treatment for Marylanders living with mental health and substance use disorders.

As lead sponsor of SB 305 Public Safety – Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence, Senator Augustine led the effort to establish a centralized technical assistance center to support the expansion of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs across Maryland. CIT is a law enforcement-led, team-based intervention to divert individuals experiencing behavioral health crises away from the criminal justice system and into treatment. It results in less lethal interactions, better outcomes and increased safety for all involved.

Senator Augustine also spearheaded legislation requiring greater parity compliance reporting from Maryland health insurers. The new law will produce information and data necessary to address challenges that commercially insured Marylanders face when attempting to access community mental health and substance use treatment.

Senator Augustine has represented Prince Georges County in the Maryland Senate since 2019. He serves on the Senate Finance Committee and the Joint Committee on Behavioral Health and Opioid Use Disorders.

# Lifetime Distinguished Service Award

**Mike Finkle**

*On Our Own of Maryland,  
Retired Founding Executive Director*

Over thirty-five years ago, Mike Finkle founded On Our Own of Maryland—a statewide peer-operated behavioral health advocacy and education organization which represents 23 affiliated, peer-operated Wellness and Recovery Centers across Maryland. Mr. Finkle is a passionate advocate for behavioral health consumers. Over the course of his long and distinguished career, Mr. Finkle has led the way in promoting equality, justice, autonomy, and choice about life decisions for individuals with mental health and substance use needs.

Mr. Finkle has been involved in mental health advocacy since 1981, when he helped to coordinate the first statewide mental health consumer conference in the nation, held at the University of Maryland/Baltimore County. He then went on to coordinate the first National Alternatives Conference for mental health consumers/ex-patients/survivors, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, at the College of Notre Dame in Baltimore. These were the first ground-breaking conferences focused on mental health consumers in the United States.

A focus on empowerment, peer support, and consumer advocacy has been at the heart of Mr. Finkle's work. Through many years of service, he has played a central role in furthering consumer rights, serving as Chairperson of the Joint Maryland Advisory Council on Mental Hygiene & the Federal Public Law 102-21 State Planning Council, Vice-President of the Mental Health Association, founding board member of the Maryland Association of Psychiatric Support Services (now CBH of Maryland), and Chairperson of the State Advisory Council for Individuals with Disabilities. He also served

on the board of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill (now NAMI Maryland) and the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery. Mr. Finkle received the 2010 Joy in Advocacy Award for his efforts to improve services for mental health consumers and for advancing the field of disability rights advocacy at the national and state levels. And now, the Lifetime Distinguished Service Award for his passion, leadership, and ongoing dedication.

# Organizations

## PLATINUM SPONSOR

Optum Maryland Behavioral Health

## GOLD SPONSORS

Adventist Health Care

Affiliated Sante Group

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

Maryland Coalition of Families

## SILVER SPONSORS

Associated Catholic Charities

Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland

GRF CPAs & Advisors

Maryland Association of Behavioral Health Authorities

National Council on Alcoholism and

Drug Dependence—MD Chapter

On Our Own of Maryland

Sheppard Pratt

University of Maryland Psychiatry



# Individual Patrons

Viviana Azar  
Stephen Baron  
Sharyn Blum  
Charles Conklin  
Betty McGarvie Crowley  
Stephanie Dibella  
Michael Friedman  
Stephen Goldberg  
Celeste Graham  
Randall Lutz  
Garrett Mannchen  
Don Mathis  
Kathleen McCallum  
Diane McComb  
Jim McComb  
Karen McNamara  
Thomas Merrick

Lynn Mumma  
Lee Ohnmacht  
Patrice O'Toole  
Teresa Redd  
Quiana Roberts  
Amy Ruddle  
Penny Scrivens  
Katelyn Shephard  
Katherine Smith  
Martha P Stein  
Firoozeh Taherpoor  
Jane Walker  
Michele Warren  
Lauren Young  
Eileen Zeller

# 2021

## Public Policy Goals

### SERVICE ACCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

MHAMD will work to ensure that individuals with mental health and substance use disorders have access to:

- High-quality, trauma-informed, culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services, provided in the least restrictive environment, that promote early intervention, recovery, resiliency and best practices in care, regardless of insurance status
- A statewide, fully functioning behavioral health safety net which includes a 24/7 crisis response system
- Equitable insurance coverage that complies with federal and state parity laws
- Programs that divert individuals from the criminal justice system, effective treatment when incarcerated, and aftercare services upon community re-entry
- Integrated, well-coordinated and evidence-based mental health, substance use and somatic care in the advancement of improved health outcomes, supported by consistent outcome measurement across payers and providers
- Fully staffed and functional state agencies and service providers ensuring the effective delivery of critical behavioral health services and the efficient administration of vital public support systems
- Affordable, suitable housing options
- Mental Health First Aid training

### CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT

MHAMD will work to ensure that individuals with mental health and substance use disorders can:

- Receive care in violence-and coercion-free environments
- Access self-directed care models, including Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP) Attain education and employment goals
- Share feedback regarding services to improve quality through the Maryland Consumer Quality Team
- Access timely and effective complaint and grievance procedures
- Access and control who accesses their electronic healthcare information

### RACIAL DISPARITIES

MHAMD will work to address systemic and structural issues that result in:

- Racial inequities in access to quality mental health and substance use disorder services

# 2021

## Public Policy Goals

- Disparate criminalization of racial and ethnic minorities with mental health and substance use disorders
- A range of negative social determinants of health that fall disproportionately on minority communities

### FAMILIES

MHAMD will work to ensure that families of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders are:

- Supported in efforts to provide their loved ones with the consumer-focused and person-centered services that meet their needs

### CHILDREN & YOUTH

MHAMD will work to ensure that youth with mental health and substance use disorders can access:

- A comprehensive, coordinated and effective statewide system of care that addresses the developmental ages and needs of children, and includes services for transition aged youth
- School behavioral health services
- Services without a requirement that their families relinquish custody in order to obtain care

### VETERANS

MHAMD will work to ensure that families of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders can:

- Access coordinated care for themselves and their families, regardless of home jurisdiction or reason for discharge from military service

### OLDER ADULTS

MHAMD will work to ensure that older adults with mental health and substance use disorders can:

- Receive care that enables them to age in place in the community and care setting of their choosing
- Access support services that prevent premature institutionalization
- Receive needed behavioral health services through the Medicaid Waiver for Older Adults

# A History of Social Action

For more than 100 years, the Mental Health Association of Maryland has addressed the mental health needs of Marylanders of all ages through programs that *educate* the public to increase understanding and provide resources, *advance public policy* to improve care and outcomes, and *monitor the quality of services* received by individuals living with mental illness and substance use disorders.

Our experienced staff and volunteers work with local Mental Health Association chapters and branches across the state of Maryland. Through our local, state and national network, consumers, advocates, family members and concerned citizens work together to promote mental health and recovery from mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The record of accomplishment that follows, covering the past 10 years, is a tribute to the energy and dedication of MHAMD volunteers, leaders and partners across the state who believe that change for the better is always possible.

**2020** Organized the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition around an ambitious legislative effort that protected \$25 million in proposed budget cuts to community mental health and substance use disorder services, ensured that student behavioral health needs were addressed in a landmark education reform bill, enhanced parity compliance reporting requirements, and enacted measures to improve the diversion of individuals in crisis away from emergency departments and the criminal justice system. Worked to ensure access to care and prevent a disruption of behavioral health services during the coronavirus pandemic. Advocated for increased flexibility in the delivery of treatment via telehealth. Pressed for actions to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on Marylanders living and working in congregate settings. Convened a range of stakeholders in a series of forums aimed at reducing racial disparities at the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice. Partnered with the business community to launch a private sector initiative focused on improving behavioral health care in Maryland, D.C., and Northern Virginia.

# A History of Social Action

- 2019** Rallied the Behavioral Health Coalition to secure a multi-year 22 percent increase in funding for community mental health and substance use disorder services, improve behavioral health service coordination in Maryland schools, ensure the availability of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders in correctional facilities, and modify several laws and programs designed to divert people with behavioral health needs away from emergency departments. Defeated legislation that threatened to disrupt public behavioral health services for 300,000 Marylanders and informed a subsequent state-level system restructuring process. Helped shape recommendations developed by the newly established Commission to Study Mental and Behavioral Health in Maryland. Ensured the inclusion of behavioral health service categories in justice reinvestment grant funding. Supported successful efforts to increase behavioral health supports for veterans, expand access to telehealth services, and decriminalize attempted suicide.
- 2018** Worked with the Behavioral Health Coalition to secure an additional \$16 million in funding for the state's behavioral health workforce; improve access to care through an expansion of telehealth services and a three-year, \$12-million funding initiative to increase crisis response services; enhance the quality and effectiveness of behavioral health care delivered in primary care settings through a \$2-million pilot of the Collaborative Care Model; and ensure access to data necessary to improve the system of care for children and youth. Informed and influenced state processes charged with redesigning Maryland's public education system and reinvesting savings from various criminal justice reform policies. Advocated for passage of a "red flag" law to reduce suicide by firearm. Continued efforts to ensure the appropriate implementation of federal healthcare reform and insurance parity laws.

# A History of Social Action

**2017** Saw passage of the Keep the Door Open Act — the namesake legislation of the Behavioral Health Coalition's multi-year advocacy effort to increase funding for community mental health and substance use disorder services. The bill was included as part of the landmark Heroin and Opioid Prevention Effort (HOPE) and Treatment Act of 2017. Led the effort to pass legislation increasing maternal mental health resources and training for the public and providers. Advocated successfully for the adoption of budget language in furtherance of a pilot Collaborative Care program. Partnered with other stakeholders to develop an outpatient civil commitment pilot program designed to improve services for individuals with serious mental illness who have not been well-served by the public behavioral health system. Realized a longstanding goal of the Coalition on Mental Health and Aging with the establishment of regional geriatric behavioral health specialists. Reconstituted a Children's Behavioral Health Coalition to focus and coordinate advocacy efforts specific to that population.

**2016** Together with the Behavioral Health Coalition, renewed the Keep the Door Open campaign and mobilized around an ambitious agenda to properly resource Maryland's community behavioral health provider network, develop a plan for ensuring access to critical crisis services statewide, and increase substance use disorder funding and treatment resources. Partnered with other stakeholders to pass landmark network adequacy legislation. Worked to improve health outcomes in primary care settings by championing the use of the Collaborative Care Model in Medicaid Managed Care Organizations. Advocated successfully for the passage of legislation to advance community-partnered school behavioral health programs, and to protect services and funding for youth with behavioral health needs. Successfully amended a broad criminal justice reform initiative to ensure that savings gleaned from the effort will be reinvested into community behavioral health supports.

# A History of Social Action

- 2015** Led the Behavioral Health Coalition in an advocacy campaign to “Keep the Door Open,” successfully reversing more than \$20 million in budget cuts to public mental health and substance use disorder services. Published a study highlighting serious concerns related to the accuracy and adequacy of commercial health insurers’ psychiatric networks. Championed legislation establishing a task force to study and address maternal mental health needs across the state. Took on an expanded substance use disorder advocacy role, supporting successful efforts to expand overdose prevention initiatives and improve the effectiveness of Maryland’s Good Samaritan law. Organized a first-of-its-kind Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) train-the-trainer program, building an expertise and capacity that has allowed for more regional and local CIT training.
- 2014** Continued through reintroduction of the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Safety Net Act to raise awareness about unmet needs in a variety of areas, including services for children and older adults, housing and reentry needs, and mental health literacy. Played a key role in the enactment of legislation merging the state’s Mental Hygiene Administration and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration into a single Behavioral Health Administration. Advocated successfully to ensure consumer representation in the process to implement a Community Integrated Medical Home Program. Raised critical issues related to the availability of mental health services in schools; supported successful legislation to eliminate barriers to treatment by regulating the insurer step therapy process; and addressed serious access-to-care issues by supporting legislation expanding coverage to all Medicaid recipients for healthcare services delivered via telemedicine.
- 2013** Worked with the Maryland Mental Health Coalition to address longstanding, unmet service needs through introduction of the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Safety Net Act.

# A History of Social Action

- 2013** Achieved a supplemental budget appropriation that included additional funding for Safety Net priorities, including crisis services, Mental Health First Aid and evidence-based programming. Collaborated with addictions advocates to secure passage of legislation making it easier for consumers to enforce their rights under the federal parity law and for the state to better ensure carrier compliance. Fought to ensure balance during policy debates about gun ownership. Remained active in efforts to implement the federal Affordable Care Act and advocated successfully for amendments to improve continuity of care and oversight. Supported a departmental recommendation to combine treatment for specialty mental health and substance use disorder services under the management of a single risk-based administrative services organization.
- 2012** Advocated successfully for the restoration of mental health funding through a supplemental budget appropriation and the rejection of millions of dollars in proposed legislative cuts to the public mental health system. Secured passage of legislation to increase transparency in the process by which Medicaid Managed Care Organizations report Medical Loss Ratios. Amended Health Benefit Exchange legislation in an effort to require that qualified health plans demonstrate parity compliance. Supported successful efforts to enhance Maryland's community college tuition exemption for individuals with disabilities; require the availability of mental health support services for employees of state facilities who are affected by traumatic events; expand the role of the Cultural Linguistic Health Care Provider Competency Program; expand coverage for services delivered through telemedicine; extend tax credits for employers who hire people with disabilities; and prevent recidivism by eliminating barriers to the successful reentry of ex-offenders. Continued involvement in all efforts related to the integration of public behavioral health services and healthcare reform.



# A History of Social Action

- 2011** Worked in concert with the Mental Health Coalition to reduce proposed cuts to the public mental health system budget, increase community services funding, and safeguard services for vulnerable Marylanders. Achieved through the governor's supplemental budget \$10 million in state general and federal funds to enhance rates for community mental health providers and \$25 million for MHA deficiency appropriation. Collaborated with disability and healthcare advocates to pass the first alcohol tax increase in 40 years. Supported legislation to expand anti-bullying and harassment policies to nonpublic schools; limit employers from using credit checks as a factor when hiring; require coordination among state and federal agencies to provide mental health services and information to veterans; ensure MHA facilities and staff conform to principles of trauma-informed care; and extend tax credits for employers who hire people with disabilities. Participated actively in ongoing discussions related to behavioral health integration and broader healthcare reform. Fought to ensure compliance with state and federal parity laws.

# Mental Health Association of Maryland

*The Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is the state's only volunteer, nonprofit citizens' organization that brings together consumers, families, professionals, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and mental illness.*

*We envision a just, humane, and healthy society in which all people are accorded respect, dignity, and the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and prejudice.*





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