

EQUAL TREATMENT —*Maryland*—

**Mental health and substance
use care available when and
where Marylanders need it.**

Marylanders should have access to culturally competent behavioral health care that promotes recovery and resiliency, outcomes should drive care delivery and efficient use of resources, and care should be available to all regardless of age, race, gender or insurance status.

Unfortunately, this is not currently the case. Two-thirds of Maryland's counties qualify as federally designated mental health professional shortage areas, commercial health insurance companies in Maryland reimburse behavioral health providers nearly 20% less than other doctors for similar procedures, Maryland ranked 7th worst in the nation last year for opioid death rates, and the state has seen a 46% increase in children accessing hospital emergency departments for suicide attempts.

There are solutions. Community-based reforms and workforce initiatives can improve behavioral health outcomes, save money, and keep people out of crisis.

2023 Behavioral Health Crisis Prevention Platform

1. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE SURGE IN DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CARE

Require the Maryland Department of Health to develop and advance a plan to expand the state's network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)

- An inability to access community-based mental health and substance use care on demand results in heavy reliance on emergency departments, law enforcement, and Maryland's limited behavioral health crisis response system
- CCBHCs are specially-designated, sustainably-financed, 24/7 clinics that provide a comprehensive range of integrated, evidence-based mental health and substance use services, including 24/7 crisis response and medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
- States that have implemented CCBHCs broadly have seen increased access to care, reductions in emergency department and inpatient utilization, mitigation of behavioral health workforce challenges, higher engagement post discharge from hospitals, improved utilization of MAT for opioid use disorders, and improved integration with physical care
- Maryland currently has five CCBHCs demonstrating strong outcomes, but they are time-limited and only available to a small number of individuals
- The federal government has made \$40 million available for planning grants and technical assistance to states for CCBHC expansion, and is providing four years of enhanced Medicaid match for CCBHC services

2. ENSURE MEDICAID RECIPIENTS HAVE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE PRIMARY CARE SERVICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO MARYLANDERS WITH COMMERCIAL INSURANCE OR MEDICARE

Require Medicaid Reimbursement for the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM)

- Most individuals receive mental health and substance use care from primary care physicians, and need has grown exponentially in the wake of COVID-19
- Collaborative care is a validated, evidence-based approach that efficiently integrates physical and behavioral health in primary care settings and has been shown to save \$6 in health care spending for every \$1 invested
- 80+ randomized trials have demonstrated CoCM's effectiveness, and it is a covered service in the Medicare program and among most commercial health insurers
- Maryland Medicaid recipients continue to be unfairly denied access to this effective service delivery model, despite clinically significant improvement in depression and anxiety symptoms among the small number of individuals served by Maryland's very limited Medicaid pilot

3. ENSURE WORKFORCE EXISTS TO ACCOMPLISH SERVICE ACCESS GOALS

Establish a Behavioral Health Workforce Investment Fund and require a comprehensive behavioral health workforce assessment to inform fund allocation

- Maryland has 63 federally designated mental health professional shortage areas, including 16 entire counties, and less than 20% of individuals in these areas are getting their mental health needs met
- Staff vacancies exist in over 80% of Maryland's child-serving community behavioral health programs
- Recent high profile clinic closures, including Eastern Shore Psychological Services, will impact thousands of Marylanders with behavioral health needs
- Several jurisdictions across the country have established dedicated funding for pipeline development and retention strategies to support and expand the behavioral health workforce

The Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition is statewide group of 100+ consumer organizations, professional associations, service providers, peer-run organizations, and health systems dedicated to ensuring individuals living with mental health and substance use disorders have high quality and accessible services and supports. To see our full member list, visit EqualTreatmentMD.org.

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