



Building a Bridge to a Better Future:

Creating the Community-based Behavioral Health System New Jerseyans Deserve!

Now, more than ever, a strong, sustainable community-based system of care is needed for New Jersey's children and adults. Inadequate rates have crippled many programs since the transition to a fee-for-service reimbursement system in 2017 and made it nearly impossible for providers to be competitive in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Investment is needed to sustain quality care and to then expand capacity to increase access to care. Toward those ends, NJAMHAA calls on the Legislature and Administration to support the following:

Budget Priorities

- Close the deficit gap caused by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (DMHAS) transition to fee-for-service reimbursement with a \$25 million investment (until such time that rates are adjusted to cover the actual costs of care).
- Double the School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) appropriation for a total \$30 million state investment in readily accessible comprehensive services for middle and high school students.
- Appropriate funds to cover the increased costs under mandated minimum wage requirements as they are implemented, including other salary increases needed to prevent the compression of wage scales.

Other Budget Recommendations

- Appropriate \$10 million for mental health providers and renew the \$6 million appropriation for substance use treatment providers to upgrade, implement and maintain interoperable EHRs.
- Pass legislation to expand Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) (A1242/S1137) (\$3 million).
- Pass S138 and A1444 (with amendment) to reinstate the 70+ year exemption of vehicle registration fees for nonprofit organizations' vehicles that was reversed in 2017.
- Appropriate \$1.5 million to support the Screening Center early intervention grant program.
- Appropriate \$10 million as an initial investment into facility resources for behavioral health providers to further develop integrated care.

Policy Priorities

- Pass A4179/S2559 to make several temporary telehealth provisions permanent.
- Allow Psychiatric Advance Practice Nurses to fill the role of Psychiatrists on Programs for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) Teams.
- Pass legislation to provide liability protection to behavioral health organizations that comply with applicable COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Other Policy Recommendations

- Establish a formula for automatic upward rate and contract adjustments that is indexed to actual costs.
- Pass legislation that would allow Psychiatric Advance Practice Nurses to sign Screening Certificates.
- Establish a sustainability and expansion plan for New Jersey's Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs).
- Establish an ombudsman position in the Department of Banking and Insurance that would be dedicated to behavioral health services.