



New Jersey must continue to invest in a strong, sustainable system of care to meet the needs of New Jersey's diverse children, youth and adults. This may only be achieved with significant investments in the behavioral healthcare workforce that is needed to sustain quality care for the many lives who depend on them and to expand capacity to increase access to care for all New Jerseyans. Toward those ends, NJAMHAA calls on the Legislature and Administration to support the following in the FY2025 Budget and 2024 Legislative Session:

## **Invest in the Behavioral Healthcare Workforce**

- Invest \$60 million (est. \$43m state and \$17m federal funds) in Department of Human Services' behavioral health care rates and contracts to allow for more competitive wages.
- Invest \$5 million for recruitment and retention bonuses for behavioral health staff.
- Invest \$5 million in incentives for behavioral health organizations to become field placement sites and provide clinical supervision of interns.
- Provide a 7% cost of living increase to behavioral health rates and contracts within the Department of Children and Families.
- Invest an additional \$32 million (est. \$16m state and \$16m federal funds) in Care Management Organizations.
- Invest \$3 million in School Based Youth Services Programs (SBYSPs) and other contracts within the School Linked Services budget line to bring funding equal to the FY2022 funding level.

## **Invest to Fill Gaps in the Continuum of Care**

- Invest \$1.7 million in dedicated funding for the Nurse Navigator program serving incarcerated individuals.
- Invest \$667,000 of additional funding to expand training opportunities at the Governor's Reentry Training and Employment Center.
- Invest \$20 million in capital funding for behavioral health providers to see to necessary repairs and improvements at their aging facilities.

## **Legislative Priorities to Support the Workforce and Sustainability**

- Pass S1032/A1143 to establish a formula for automatic upward rate and contract adjustments that are indexed to actual costs.
- Pass S2504/A3937 to set Medicaid rates for mental health services equal to Medicare rates for the same services.
- Pass S318/A2231 to establish an annual cost of living adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index for certain children, youth, and family services organizations.
- Pass S1761/A2805 to bring accountability to New Jersey's licensing Boards.
- Pass S2723/A112 to reinstate the 70+ year exemption of vehicle registration fees for nonprofit organizations' vehicles that was reversed in 2017.
- Amend A2803 to include Social Work Interns and Master of Social Work Alcohol and Drug Counselor students in the definition of healthcare provider for the purpose of providing telehealth services.

## **Support for Services for Justice Involved Individuals**

- Introduce legislation to:
  - Require statewide audit and resource directory of deflection, diversion and reentry resources.
  - Require a comprehensive study and roadmap for increasing the number of emergency, transitional and permanent housing units for justice-involved individuals, including congregate transitional housing dedicated to this population.