

## **Federal Budget FY2023**

### **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023**

On December 29, 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law a \$1.7 trillion package that funded the federal government through September 30, 2023. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (H.R. 2617, which is more than 4,000 pages) is known more simply as the Omnibus Budget Bill (Omnibus).

**The following bills affecting mental health and substance use treatment service delivery and reimbursement, which have long been priorities of NJAMHAA, with advocacy spanning several years, were included in the Omnibus:**

- **Mental Health Access Improvement Act:** Provides for coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under Medicare.
- **Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act:** Increases access to medication-assisted treatment by eliminating the separate registration requirement for dispensing narcotic drugs in Schedule III, IV, or V (such as buprenorphine).
- **Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act:** Boosts SUD training for healthcare providers and helps standardize prescriber education practices.

For highlights of funding for mental health and SUD services in the Omnibus, the following lists are excerpted from the Senate Committee on Appropriations' summary of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies' portion of the Omnibus bill:

### **Opioids & Substance Misuse:**

The bill provides approximately \$4.9 billion to address opioid use disorder, an increase of more than \$345 million above fiscal year 2022 levels. This funding includes:

- Nearly \$1.6 billion to states to address the opioid epidemic through the State Opioid Response Grant program, which is a \$50 million increase over fiscal year 2022
- A \$100 million increase for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant
- \$111 million for medication-assisted treatment
- \$505 million for opioid overdose surveillance and prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- \$80 million to address the needs of children affected by the opioid crisis
- \$145 million to help affected rural communities combat the opioid epidemic

### **Mental Health:**

- \$385 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC), a \$70 million increase over fiscal year 2022
- \$1.01 billion for the Mental Health Block Grant to provide mental health treatment services and support community mental health services, a \$150 million increase

- \$20 million, a \$10 million increase, to expand a pilot program for crisis response
- \$501.6 million in fiscal year 2023 funding—a nearly \$400 million increase—for the Suicide Prevention Lifeline to successfully transition to 988, which includes \$7 million to continue the Behavioral Health Crisis and 988 Coordinating Office at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- \$130 million for children’s mental health services, a \$5 million increase
- \$140 million, a \$20 million increase, for Project AWARE [Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education], which will expand efforts to identify and help children and youth in need of mental health care, including through addressing the needs of children who have experienced trauma
- The bill also invests \$111 million for Department of Education programs designed to increase the availability of mental health services in schools, including by expanding training programs to prepare new school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing has noted that the CCBHC funds in the Omnibus bill (noted above) are in addition to the already expanded CCBHC demonstration program through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. The National Council also shared that the following are in the Omnibus bill:

- Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery (STAR) Loan Repayment Program: \$40 million toward educating and training SUD professionals
- Parity: Authorizes \$10 million for grants to states to support parity enforcement.
- Expansion of Peer Specialists within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Creates a \$13 million program to increase outreach and education about peer specialists, expands virtual peer support platforms and makes a program permanent for hiring at least two peer specialists at every VA primary care facility.

The Omnibus bill includes a section that provides a two-year extension of the following Medicare telehealth flexibilities through December 31, 2024:

- Removing geographic requirements and expanding originating sites
- Expanding practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services
- Expanding telehealth services for federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics
- Delaying the in-person requirements under Medicare for mental health services furnished through telehealth and telecommunications technology
- Allowing for the furnishing of audio-only telehealth services
- Requiring a study on telehealth and Medicare program integrity

Some additional provisions in the Omnibus bill that NJAMHAA members will find of interest include:

- A five-year investment with historic funding levels for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
- Expansion of the Medicare Graduate Medical Education program that helps train doctors in residency (for which half of new funding will go towards training psychiatrists) and supports nursing school programs
- Guarantee that every child in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (40 million children nationwide) will have 12 months of continuous, stable coverage when they enroll
- Funding for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development programs totaling \$61.8 billion, which is \$8.1 billion more than FY2022 enacted levels —The details of all the housing program increases may be found in [this analysis](#) by the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Lastly, here are a few of the more general provisions included in the Omnibus bill that are of broad interest:

- Election reforms to prevent another January 6th incident
- Policy prohibiting TikTok on government devices
- \$858 billion in defense funding
- \$45 billion in funding for Ukraine
- \$41 billion in funding for communities recovering from natural disasters, such as drought, hurricanes, flooding, and wildfire
- The pandemic preparedness package that was negotiated, but not passed earlier this year

[House Committee on Appropriations Budget Summary](#)