

Priorities for Behavioral Health

December 7, 2022

CBH

The Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland (CBH) is the professional association for mental health and addiction treatment providers. Our **108 members deliver over \$560 million in services to Maryland residents annually**. Our average member delivers \$6.2 million in community-based mental health and addiction treatment to their local communities every year.



Sustain and grow Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)

Make mental health and addiction treatment more accessible by sustaining and growing Maryland's Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). CCBHCs are 24-hour clinics that address the comprehensive behavioral health needs of children and adults, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay for care. CCBHCs allow patients to see a variety of specialists in a single visit, including psychiatrists, addiction specialists, nutritionists and general health practitioners. They have been shown effective in other states in reducing hospital emergency department and inpatient utilization by offering primary behavioral health care and crisis intervention, when needed.



Implement performance-based payments for achieving positive outcomes

Move our public behavioral health system to an outcome-based payment model. Maryland's current fee-for-service system incentivizes volume of services without regard to quality of care, and discourages innovation and accountability. Moving to an outcome-based system helps specialists determine the best treatments for their patients while taking into account their individual needs and interrelated issues.



Address the broken Administrative Services Organization (ASO) with prompt procurement

Behavioral health providers operate on thin margins and rely on accurate, timely reimbursement in order to stay in business. Our current ASO vendor, Optum Maryland, has been a dismal failure, unable to meet the most basic contract deliverables like authorizing services or paying claims. A scathing legislative audit report published in November 2022 proves that Optum is beyond repair. While Optum's contract runs through the end of 2024, now is the time to initiate an RFP process in order for a new vendor to test its systems for at least 12 months before going live in January 2025.



Address the workforce crisis and improve treatment capacity by increasing provider rates

Behavioral health providers faced workforce challenges before the pandemic, but the twin hits of COVID and Optum exacerbated those challenges and nearly forced many behavioral health providers to close their doors. A larger rate increase for Maryland providers will stabilize them financially and allow them to compete for a qualified workforce to meet the rapidly escalating demand for services.