

Increased Funding for Mental Health Services

The commonwealth and its county partners must work together to fully support the needs of our citizens and our communities that are impacted by drug abuse, mental illness and developmental disabilities.

Community-based mental health services—such as community residential programs, family-based support, outpatient care and crisis intervention—are critical to the well-being of our constituents and our communities. Funding levels for county mental health services have direct impacts on whether these important community and family supports will be available. Yet for too many years, state funding for mental health services has lagged far behind needs, as counties find themselves advocating to prevent these funds from being cut, much less achieving the increases that are needed to catch up from years of underfunding.

On top of that, there is a recurring threat to eliminate the successful Behavioral HealthChoices program, which would disrupt care and treatment for tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians and increase the cost of services. For the past 20 years, Behavioral HealthChoices has allowed each county the flexibility to deliver mental health and drug and alcohol services to individuals enrolled in Medicaid. Counties have been able to coordinate and invest in those programs and services that meet local needs and challenges, and clients and their families have been highly satisfied with these local services.

Close collaboration between the legislature and administration and counties is critical to addressing the mental health system as a whole. This includes increasing mental health base funds for expanded services, beds and diversions, as well as abandoning efforts to dismantle Behavioral HealthChoices, which has provided important behavioral health services to some of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable community members.



COUNTIES SUPPORT:

- Commitment of full and sustainable state and federal funding for behavioral health services at a level that responds to societal and economy-driven increases in caseloads.
- Prioritizing the state-county partnership in service delivery to continue efforts to integrate services.
- Preserving the Behavioral HealthChoices program so counties can continue providing local mental health services in the most effective way possible.

For more information on **increased funding for mental health services**, contact **Brinda Penyak** at (717) 736-4737 or bpenyak@pacounties.org.



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