



2021 CCAP Priorities Key Talking Points for Counties

BACKGROUND

- Each of these priorities showcases counties' commitment to the core services they provide to improve the well-being of the people and communities of Pennsylvania.
- Counties deliver services in partnership with the state and seek partnership in decision making regarding their programs and responsibilities.
- Collaboration between the state and counties is necessary to arrive at more effective solutions.

Counties should tell their local stories, including examples of relevant impacts to their programs and those they serve, within each of the following priorities as appropriate.

ELECTION REFORMS: PRE-CANVASSING AND MAIL-IN BALLOT APPLICATION DEADLINES

- Counties take their responsibility seriously to assure the integrity and security of the elections process.
- Allowing counties to pre-canvass mail-in ballots prior to Election Day is essential to be able to provide timely results as the public expects.
- The mail-in ballot application deadlines must be moved back to 15 days prior to an election to allow enough time for the county to process the application and for the ballot to be mailed from county to voter and back again.
- Leverage the Election Law Advisory Board, which was created to ensure all stakeholders are consulted to create positive, effective election policy.
- Counties must be at the table during policy discussions so that statutory changes can be implemented clearly and consistently, and to assure appropriate resources are available for counties to implement any policy changes.

BROADBAND EXPANSION

- Business, education, health care, emergency services and other key parts of our everyday lives rely on access to broadband;
- However, more than 800,000 Pennsylvanians do not have access.
- COVID-19 has exacerbated this issue, limiting access to opportunities for those who do not have access, and causing difficulty for overcrowded networks.
- Partnership is critical to expanding broadband – the commonwealth must develop partnerships among federal, state and local government, and the private sector to identify successful approaches and best practices that can remedy this problem.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES CRISIS SOLUTIONS

- EMS is in crisis as many communities, urban and rural, wrestle with a decline or outright lack of services.

- While counties are not directly responsible for EMS delivery, they can help develop and implement policy solutions and build capacity.
- Allowing for an EMS authority model that would be capable of county-wide or regional EMS service delivery could assist in optimizing service deployment and service areas and offer opportunities for dedicated funding sources.
- CCAP can also help, through our EMS Task Force, which is committed to providing tools and resources that will assist in addressing this crisis.

PROTECTING FUNDING FOR COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

- Counties administer human services programs, often on behalf of the state and federal governments, to protect our most vulnerable citizens.
- However, mandates and caseloads continue to increase while state funding support has been stagnant, or in some cases, even cut.
- Counties need a state-county partnership to assure sustainable funding for all human services programs.
- Funding must be increased and must be sustainable before the safety net becomes so frayed it can no longer support those in need.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Counties provide community-based mental health services such as community residential programs, family-based support, outpatient care and crisis intervention, which are critical to the well-being of our constituents and our communities.
- State funding has lagged far behind needs and caseloads for far too long.
- A targeted, strategic investment of state dollars into county community mental health services is necessary to sustain the existing safety net and bolster the availability of mental health services.
- At the same time, the Behavioral HealthChoices program must be preserved to allow counties to coordinate and invest in mental health and drug and alcohol programs and services that meet local needs.
- Close collaboration between the legislature, the administration and counties is critical to addressing the mental health system and ensuring that the safety net remains sustainable for those who need it.