

The Mental Health Safety Net Coalition



Alliance of Community Service Providers
Aspire Child & Family Services
Bedford-Somerset Developmental & Behavioral Health Services
Bell Socialization Services
The Bradley Center
Brooke Glen Behavioral Hospital
Chester County Department of MH/IDD
Children First
Children's Home of Reading (CHOR)
Children's Service Center of Wyoming Valley, Inc.
Clarion Psychiatric Center
Community Services Group
County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania
Eleos Health
Family Services of Northwest Pennsylvania
Chestnut Ridge Counseling, Inc.
Institute for Behavioral Change (IBC)
Intercommunity Action, Inc.
Fairmont Behavioral Health Systems
Friends Hospital
Foundations Behavioral Health
Haven Behavioral Hospital of Eastern Pennsylvania
Haven Behavioral Hospital of Philadelphia
Haven Behavioral Hospital of Philadelphia
Horsham Clinic
Lancaster Behavioral Health Hospital
MAX Association
Meadows Psychiatric Center
Merakey
PA Council of Children Youth & Family Services (PCCYFS)
Philadelphia Mental Health Care Corporation (PMHCC)
Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA)
Renewal, Inc.

Request: Increase Investments in State-Funded Adult County MH Services

Issue: County community mental health services are under enormous stress and often are no longer able to meet the needs of their communities. While inadequate funding has been the norm over the past decade, the COVID-19 pandemic served to accelerate and deepen these challenges. The status quo is not sustainable. The Mental Health Safety Net Coalition urges the General Assembly to increase the proposed new investment in county mental health services funding from \$20 million to \$100 million for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26 budget. Rebuilding our State governed, county administered mental health system will require a multi-year, sustained effort with annual increases in funding to help ensure Pennsylvanians receive needed mental health services in the right setting and at the right time.

Consequences — Lack of Sustainable Funding:

For Pennsylvanians with a mental illness, the impact of the county funding shortfalls is already evident, with shortages of key mental health professionals, chronic underpayment of mental health providers, reductions and closures in mental health residential programs and supportive services such as employment and psychiatric rehabilitation services, uneven crisis response services, closure of outpatient programs, and the continuing criminalization of mental illness. Across the Commonwealth, there is no consistent level of mental health services available, and access to critical services largely depends on which county you live in.

The failure to invest in county mental health services is resulting in higher costs to the Commonwealth in other systems like Medicaid, law enforcement, corrections, state-operated mental health hospitals, and community hospital emergency departments. The Commonwealth's mental health system is out of balance and all too often lacks the capacity to intervene with the right service, in the right setting, and at the right time. As a result, the norm has become responding when people are in crisis and in the most expensive settings, whether it be an emergency department, inpatient hospitalization, or, even worse, jail.

While we understand the difficulty of making new investments in the current budget environment, the failure to provide the necessary community-based mental health services will result in higher costs from both a fiscal and human standpoint. This is truly a case of "pay me now or pay me later." We urge you to increase funding for county-based in the FY 2025/26 budget.

**Roxbury Treatment Center
Stairways Behavioral Health
Strawberry Fields Inc.
True North Wellness
UPMC
Westmoreland
Casemanagement and
Supports, Inc.**

If you have any questions, please contact [Jim Sharp](#), COO and Director of Mental Health Services, Behavioral Health Division, for the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA).

Sincerely,
The Mental Health Safety Net Coalition