



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

June 24, 2022

The Honorable Kim Ward
Majority Leader
Pennsylvania State Senate
Senate Box 203039
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3039

The Honorable Kerry Benninghoff
Majority Leader
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202171
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2171

The Honorable Jay Costa
Minority Leader
Pennsylvania State Senate
Senate Box 203042
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

The Honorable Joanna McClinton
Majority Leader
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202191
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2191

The Honorable Pat Browne
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
Pennsylvania State Senate
Senate Box 203016
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3016

The Honorable Stan Saylor
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202094
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2094

The Honorable Vince Hughes
Minority Chairman, Appropriations Committee
Pennsylvania State Senate
Senate Box 203007
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3007

The Honorable Matt Bradford
Minority Chairman, Appropriations Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202070
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2070

Critical Need for Substantial Behavioral Health Funding in the 2022–2023 State Budget

Dear Leaders and Chairmen:

We know that providing careful, accountable, responsive stewardship of taxpayer dollars is among your most important duties. At this critical moment in the budget development process, we urge you to consider the mental health and well-being of every Pennsylvanian as an essential underpinning of the commonwealth's overall success. We cannot have a vibrant economy, thriving businesses, an effective workforce, world-class education, safe communities, strong families, or other key foundations of success without healthy citizens who function well in our civic life.

As you consider how to effectively invest in Pennsylvanians' mental health, HAP reiterates the hospital community's support for:

- A substantial increase in recurring state dollars in the county mental health line to shore up Pennsylvania's existing system for crisis intervention, community- and home-based care, respite programs, school services, and other important initiatives. (See [details](#) of HAP's full proposal.)



Behavioral Health Funding in the 2022–2023 State Budget
Page 2

- A meaningful investment in Representative Schlossberg’s “Hope for PA” proposal, including but not limited to recurring state funds that can help convert and/or create new beds for inpatient care (particularly for young Pennsylvanians), embed more mental health specialists in emergency departments, and provide critical training to medical providers who are not mental health specialists.
- Funding for a grant program, as called for in legislation introduced by Representative Thomas, to extend the successful collaborative care model, which helps primary care providers more effectively integrate mental health services into their everyday practices.
- Significant deployment of one-time, federal funds to support the behavioral health workforce and invest in mental health infrastructure/capacity-building projects.
- Enactment of House Bill 1644, to create an escalation process to help patients connect with the most appropriate care settings; and House Bill 2419, to clarify important aspects of telemedicine for mental health purposes.

Over the past months, HAP and other stakeholders have provided extensive data about the current mental health crisis as well as many examples about how patients, families, health care professionals, hospitals, and communities are being crushed by its weight. We are keen to respect your time, so we will not reiterate those here. If, however, you would like additional or specific information, please have your staff reach out to HAP. We will quickly provide whatever you need.

As we have met with you and your colleagues, we have been heartened by the General Assembly’s overwhelming understanding and support for the constituents who reach out to your offices every day seeking help. We are also encouraged by the bipartisan level of energy, commitment, and additional policy proposals that continue to grow around this issue. We are ready to assist you.

Pennsylvania hospitals are committed to providing high-quality care to every patient, but they cannot do it alone or without sufficient resources. We urge you to make the necessary investments to increase the availability of all levels of mental health care across the commonwealth.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this urgent and complex issue.

Thank you,

Heather Tyler
Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

CC: The Honorable Jake Corman, President Pro Tempore, Pennsylvania State Senate
The Honorable Bryan Cutler, Speaker, Pennsylvania House of Representatives