



The Hospital + Healthsystem  
Association of Pennsylvania

*Leading for Better Health*

May 6, 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 202191  
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 202171  
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

## **Re: Behavioral Health Support in the 2022–2023 State Budget**

Dear Elected Leaders,

Every day Pennsylvania hospitals and emergency departments struggle to find timely and clinically-appropriate care for Pennsylvanians who need psychiatric treatment. It is heartbreaking and frustrating. On behalf of more than 235 organizations statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) respectfully seeks your vocal support to allocate funding to behavioral health as you consider the 2022–2023 state budget. Specifically,

- 1. Bolster community and home-based behavioral health services** by increasing state funding for county mental health programs by *at least* \$28 million.
- 2. Ensure hospitals have resources to care for patients with complex needs** by requiring that Medicaid payment rates properly reflect the cost of complex cases, longer stays, and resource-intensive treatments and that behavioral health Medicaid managed care organizations provide psychiatric support in emergency departments.
- 3. Facilitate placement in post-acute care settings** by including *an additional* roughly \$13 million to county mental health funding to assist emergency departments and passing House Bill 1644 to establish complex care transition teams to help when inpatient, psychiatric residential treatment, or other settings are unable to discharge patients.



Pennsylvanians need behavioral health care. Recent HAP research reveals that 1 in 6 children between the ages of 6 and 17 years old experience a mental health disorder; 1 in 5 adults has a mental health condition; more than 4 percent of adults live with a serious mental health concern, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression; and that fewer than 47 percent of adults living with mental illness receive treatment.

We know that you, too, hear heartbreaking stories from your constituents as they try to find appropriate care for their loved ones. Mental health concerns have a profound effect on Pennsylvanians. About 70 percent of children in the juvenile justice system have a mental health condition. A quarter of Pennsylvanians without housing struggle with serious mental illness. And, tragically, more than 2,000 Pennsylvanians died by suicide in 2020. The price is too high for inaction.

We know that hospitals are a vital part of the solution. In 2020, there were more than 120,000 inpatient hospital admissions—8 percent of all admissions—related to behavioral health in Pennsylvania. Overall, 46 percent of behavioral health-related hospital admissions started in the emergency department and nearly 40 percent of patients treated for behavioral health concerns stayed in the hospital for a week or more.

Pennsylvania hospitals are committed to providing high-quality care to every patient that walks through their doors, but they can't do it without sufficient resources and they can't do it alone. Medicaid behavioral health rates must be updated and flexible enough to meet the actual costs of care for complex patient needs. And the state must invest to increase the availability of high-quality inpatient, community, and home-based mental health services.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania understands that this is an urgent, sensitive, and complex issue. We stand ready to assist you as you evaluate these and other proposals that may have the potential to help Pennsylvanians access mental health care.

Sincerely,

Heather Tyler  
Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

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