



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

May 27, 2022

TO: Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

FROM: Heather Tyler, Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

SUBJECT: House Bill 1644—HAP Thanks You

The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) thanks you for supporting patients and hospitals across the commonwealth by passing the 'Medicaid Care Transition Program' and sending it to the Senate for consideration.

HAP believes that HB 1644 will improve behavioral health care for vulnerable Pennsylvanians by enhancing accountability and generating crucial data on which future program and policy improvements can be developed. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires behavioral health managed care organizations to help hospitals find placements for patients who are currently "boarded" in an emergency department or inpatient unit.
- Provides that, if a placement is not found within 24 hours, the case must be referred to the Department of Human Services (DHS), which must work with the managed care organization and others until an appropriate placement is identified.
- Enables—for the first time—DHS to track and measure the scope and details of this problem.

As you know, there is a behavioral health crisis in Pennsylvania. Too many of our families, friends, neighbors, and colleagues are desperately seeking help for mental distress. Patients currently face significant barriers, including long delays, to finding effective treatment. Due to workforce shortages and the pandemic, all patients are experiencing longer wait times in emergency departments, but those who need psychiatric treatment face an even greater struggle to find the care that they need.

Your partnership in passing this measure is a significant step to addressing behavioral health challenges impacting patients and their families, providers, and hospitals. The hospital community looks forward to working with you to continue to bolster Pennsylvania's behavioral health system so that every person and family in the commonwealth can get the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

On behalf of the 235 member hospitals statewide, thank you for your continued support for Pennsylvanians who need health care as well as the professionals who provide it.