



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

October 3, 2022

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

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

The Honorable Michele Brooks
Chair, Health & Human Services Committee
Pennsylvania Senate
Senate Box 203050
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3050

The Honorable Art Haywood
Minority Chair, Health & Human Services
Committee
Pennsylvania Senate
Senate Box 203004
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3004

Dear Chamber and Committee Leaders,

On behalf of more than 235 members statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) thanks you for your support of the hospital community. The state's health care continuum has been disrupted by extraordinary and concurrent stressors, including but not limited to a pandemic, an opioid epidemic, a mental health crisis, and historic workforce shortages. From supporting direct-care service providers to forgiving nurses' student loans, we appreciate your tangible help for the people who dedicate themselves to caring for Pennsylvanians.

We are particularly grateful for the legislature's current commitment to authorize spending as informed by the forthcoming recommendations of the Behavioral Health Commission for Adult Mental Health. We stand ready to assist you as complete this urgent work. As you may be aware, HAP worked with hospitals to reach consensus and provide input to the commission, recommending the dedication of these one-time investments in the behavioral health workforce through peer support, scholarships, and retention strategies; collaborative care delivery models; and infrastructure to increase emergency department crisis capacity.

In addition to enacting the commission's recommendations, HAP urges you to complete work on several well-positioned bills currently in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. With few session days remaining, each has the potential to meaningfully improve Pennsylvania's health care system:

- House Bill 2806, providing for a COVID-19 mental health public awareness campaign with a focus on front-line health care workers.



Leading for Better Health

Senate Health & Human Services Committee
October 3, 2022
Page 2

- House Bill 1644, establishing the Medicaid Care Transition Program to escalate and document instances in which hospitals cannot timely locate appropriate treatment settings for patients with mental health needs.
- House Bill 1280, amending the Patient Test Result Information Act to help ensure that individual patient circumstances can be considered by the ordering health care practitioner before initiating potentially alarming communication.

Among the bills in committee, HAP also supports:

- House Bill 2293, providing for registration and oversight of long-term care and personal care home temporary staffing agencies.
- House Bill 1630, empowering the Office of the Auditor General to audit pharmacy benefit managers that support public Medical Assistance programs.
- Senate Bill 1267, establishing the Office of Health Equity and the Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee.

Finally, we believe that the House is poised to pass and the committee may soon receive House Bill 2686, establishing a statewide collaborative care grant program to integrate behavioral health services into primary care settings. This program presents an immediate way to extend the reach of existing providers to Pennsylvanians of all ages in all communities. We strongly support it.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We hope you, your families, your staff, and your communities remain healthy and safe during this busy election season.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach me at (717) 433-1997 or HTyler@HAPonline.org.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Tyler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Heather Tyler
Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy