



When we look back on 2020, I envision we will remember the constant shifting winds of change, the tsunami of uncertainty and stress, and the cataclysmic shift in our work and personal lives as we faced down the COVID-19 pandemic. I also believe we will be amazed by our tenacity, grit, and determination to not only survive the pandemic, but by how we seized the moment to transform, create, connect, and reinforce that mental health is essential health.

The unpredicted and unprecedented upheaval of responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic amid the overdose death and suicide epidemic disrupted every aspect of life as we knew it. Staying safe, staying healthy, and staying connected became the new normal. Telehealth became the primary method for offering connection, comfort, and care. Mental health was recognized as essential health. Your workforce as behavioral health heroes.

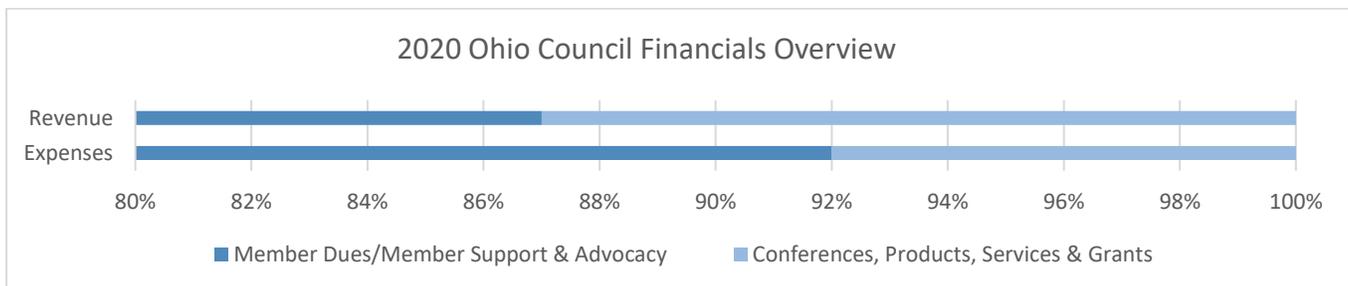
You made a seismic shift to telehealth and virtual services seemingly overnight as we sheltered in place and supported clients and families in doing the same. You overcame technology and equipment barriers. You tirelessly tracked down PPE and cleaning supplies. You filed for every type of financial and economic support offered to sustain the essential services you provide in your community and preserve your workforce. You came together to share ideas, exchange strategies, and forge new best practices. Your teams are preparing for the coming surge in demand for care as Ohioans address the isolation, stress, anxiety, and substance misuse exacerbated by the pandemic. Your resiliency endured through the seemingly constant chaos and threats, while your actions sustained services, protected clients and staff, and saved lives.

The Ohio Council rapidly accelerated our efforts to share timely and accurate information, policy analysis and advocacy efforts that you rely on to respond to the ever-changing environment and make business and clinical decisions. We created new opportunities for virtual engagement and established regular opportunities for CEOs to connect, build relationships, and collaborate on clinical and business practices. We gathered data and told your story – advocating for public policy solutions and resources to sustain essential addiction and mental health services.

Together, we have connected in new ways and are charting a new course. The Ohio Council will continue our unparalleled advocacy, leadership, and member support as we navigate these uncharted waters. We will advocate for sound public policy, investment and financing, and pragmatic solutions that sustain and support a full array of behavioral health services so all Ohioans may experience recovery, hope, healing, and health.

Wisa Lampl, LISW-S

Chief Executive Officer



OC-PAC is the Political Action Committee and a restricted account of the Ohio Council that complements our traditional policy and regulatory advocacy efforts allowing us to build and strengthen relationships with policy makers who share and support the interests and policy priorities. The OC-PAC is funded by the personal donations of individuals who are associated with or employed by members of our trade association. To learn more or make a personal contribution, call (614) 228-0747.

2020 Achievements:

- Continued membership growth and created new opportunities for CEOs to regularly connect.
- Expanded communications and information sharing to support members' COVID-19 response, planning, and business operations.
- Developed data collection and advocacy to support access to state and federal funds to offset financial losses and stabilize business and clinical operations related to COVID-19.
- Advocated for rapid expansion and continuation of a wide range of telehealth options.
- Collaborated with partners to advocate for the development, introduction, and support of the Ohio parity legislation (HB 443/SB 254).
- Led efforts to reform and stabilize Medicaid managed care payments, including multiple initiatives to successfully resolve aged accounts receivables dating back to July 2018 for members.
- Negotiated with MCOs to support providers by delaying cash advance repayments during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Continued advocacy encouraging Medicaid managed care procurement to include more transparency, accountability, and streamlined administrative requirements.
- Maintained strong partnerships and collaboration with ODM, MHAS, ODE, and RecoveryOhio to support implementation of the FY2020 budget initiatives.
- Collaborated with ODM and MHAS to respond to the remaining challenges and gaps resulting from the Medicaid BH Redesign, while also diving into a host of other significant policy issues, including, the implementation of the 1115 SUD Waiver, addressing behavioral health care coordination, designing crisis services, and building out prevention and school-based partnerships.
- Advanced the importance of social emotional development and learning in ODEs Whole Child model and highlighting member successes to support sustaining the Student Wellness and Success funds.
- Established a collaborative process to re-envision public-private contracting relationships.

2021 Advocacy: We remain steadfast in our vision and priorities for public policy solutions, which are:

- Establishment of a well-financed full continuum of care that includes access to prevention, treatment, and recovery supports;
- Education and enforcement of federal insurance parity; and
- Availability of a quality behavioral health workforce.

Targeted actions to support these priorities in the coming year include:

- Advocacy to support implementation and access to federal COVID-19 funding for BH providers.
- Collaboration with statewide partners to sustain investment in mental health and addiction services (prevention, treatment, and recovery supports) through FY 21 and in the next biennial state budget.
- Engage in a collaborative process to re-envision public-private contracting relationships.
- Medicaid managed care procurement implementation to ensure a seamless and smooth transition.
- Education and awareness building of the CCBHC model as an effective solution to support access to integrated, collaborative, high-quality behavioral health care.
- Active engagement in the 1115 SUD Waiver implementation to support access to all levels of care.
- Continue advocacy to implement key initiatives for children and families, including prevention, sustaining funds and local commitments to school-based BH services, development of PRTFs and intensive services to support youth at risk of or with high service needs.
- Sustain and grow access to quality recovery housing with our partners at Ohio Recovery Housing.
- Promote system change to advance social justice and racial equity through public policy that demands inclusion, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive services.
- Continue internal operational improvements to create efficiencies and enhance membership services.