



2022-2023 BIENNIAL BUDGET PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers (the Ohio Council) is a statewide trade association representing over 150 community-based mental health and addiction treatment service providers throughout Ohio. We are committed to improving the health and well-being of Ohio's communities by promoting high-quality, affordable, and effective behavioral health and family services. Ohio Council members consist of both for-profit and non-profit private businesses operating in all parts of the state and employ thousands of Ohioans in clinical, medical, administrative and management level positions. Ohio Council members offer services to children, adults, and families through prevention, school-based intervention, treatment, and recovery support services. The Ohio Council strategically pursues effective policy solutions that address the overdose epidemic and meet the rising demand for community-based mental health and addiction treatment services so all Ohioans may experience health, recovery, and wellness.

VIEWING BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE AS HEALTHCARE

Real-world experience and academic studies both show that investing in community-based mental health and addiction services is sound public policy and a wise fiscal decision. For every dollar spent on community behavioral health services, the return on investment is many times over. Moreover, providing timely and high-quality mental health and addiction services ensures that other public investments made in the health, education, employment, children's services, and criminal justice systems are effective and yield better long-term outcomes for all Ohioans.

The scourge of the opioid epidemic along with the surge in demand for addiction and mental health services is pushing Ohio's behavioral health system to the breaking point – the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the challenge, causing unprecedented social and economic disruption. To effectively respond to this multi-layered crisis, we must view and treat mental illness and addiction as chronic health diseases – not moral failings. Indeed, once these conditions are accurately and appropriately viewed through the lens of healthcare, a more effective response – unfiltered by stigma – can be developed, financed, and implemented in Ohio.

- **It takes years – *not days or months* – for people to stabilize in their recovery.**
- **Behavioral healthcare must be financed as healthcare. There are no other health conditions for which *treatment* is as heavily financed by grants and local tax levies.**
- **Ohio must grow the behavioral health workforce to provide access to the full range of mental health and addiction treatment services needed in every community.**
- **The State must address and enforce insurance parity laws for mental health and addiction treatment coverage and prioritize quality services and patient safety regardless of payer.**

Geoff Collver, Associate Director
collver@theohiocouncil.org

Teresa Lampl, CEO
lampl@theohiocouncil.org

Soley Hernandez, Associate Director
hernandez@theohiocouncil.org

OHIO COUNCIL 2022-2023 BIENNIAL BUDGET PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. MAINTAIN RECENT INVESTMENTS IN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
2. STRENGTHEN THE FULL CONTINUUM OF CARE
3. INVEST IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE SUPPORTS
4. ENFORCE INSURANCE PARITY AND INCREASE ACCESS TO SERVICES

MAINTAIN RECENT INVESTMENTS IN OHIO'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- The legislature has provided significant funding to support mental health and addiction treatment services – more investment is necessary to address the rising service demand.
- Support all components of the Department of Medicaid's managed care procurement process so that ODM can prioritize individual patient care over the business of managed care, resulting in healthier Ohioans and less administrative burdens for providers. (Single PBM; OhioRISE; MCO Contracts; Centralized Credentialing & Fiscal Intermediary)
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated Ohio's mental health crisis and opioid epidemic; as a result, the system must be prepared to address the surge in demand for services already occurring in our communities.

ROBUSTLY FUND AND STRENGTHEN THE FULL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTINUUM OF CARE

- Provide the necessary resources to support the full panoply of services in our communities including, prevention, early intervention, school-based services, treatment, crisis services and recovery supports. And sustain telehealth services.
- Greater urgency is required to build out Ohio's behavioral health crisis response and stabilization programs, including an expanded capacity for mobile crisis response, short-term crisis residential services, and in-patient services.

DEVELOP WORKFORCE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- The entire nation is experiencing a behavioral healthcare workforce shortage. We support the development and implementation of strategies and resources to incentivize healthcare professionals into careers in the community behavioral healthcare field.
BUDGET ASK: \$5 million increase each year in the OhioMHAS Line 336504 Community Innovation to support Workforce Development Initiative.

ENFORCE INSURANCE PARITY LAW AND INCREASE ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Encourage greater enforcement of insurance parity laws for mental health and addiction treatment services. Health insurers and managed care plans must be held accountable for any unfair and discriminatory treatment of Ohioans seeking to use their insurance benefits to access mental health and addiction treatment services.
- Address payment and access disparities between behavioral healthcare and physical healthcare systems.