Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition

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July 28, 2026

The Honorable Wes Moore
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Fiscal Year 2027 Funding Reductions for Public Behavioral Health Services

Dear Governor Moore,

Maryland is facing a historic budget crisis, the likes of which has not been seen in decades. The Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition recognizes the challenge this poses for your administration and understands that difficult decisions will have to be made. We appreciate your continuing support for Marylanders living with mental health and substance use disorders and their families, and we commit to working in coordination with you and your team to address the rising demand for behavioral health care in a fiscally responsible manner.

We write today, however, to express our **strong opposition** to the fiscal 2027 reductions to state-funded grants for behavioral health services announced just recently by the Maryland Department of Health-Behavioral Health Administration (MDH-BHA).

These reductions were announced on July 1, after grant award letters had been issued and without any prior notice or stakeholder engagement. Local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs), core service agencies (CSAs), and local addiction authorities (LAAs) across the state have been directed to identify and recommend program and service reductions totaling nearly 13% of their existing budgets. At no point during the MDH-BHA budget hearings earlier this year was the possibility of such a sizeable reduction discussed or disclosed. If allowed to stand, these cuts will create significant challenges for community programs, many of whom have already entered into contracts, committed resources, hired staff, and begun implementing services in reliance on the funding awards issued by the state.

The reductions in these grants will disrupt services, cause programs to reduce hours or layoff staff, and create additional challenges for Maryland's strained health care system. Some programs may even have to close their doors. The state-funded grants from MDH-BHA support a range of behavioral health services that are not reimbursable through Medicaid. These vital services include peer recovery support, case management, child and family care coordination, crisis response services, and overdose prevention, to name just a few. These services keep people in need of behavioral health care out of jails

and hospitals by connecting them to a range of treatment and recovery supports in the community. Cuts to these programs will increase the strain on Maryland's emergency departments, which already hold the unenviable distinction of having some of the longest wait times in the country.[1]

The need for quality mental health and substance use care has never been greater. More than 30% of Marylanders in need of counseling or therapy do not receive it, a rate that exceeds the national average.[2] Maryland's percentage of serious suicidal ideation among youth aged 12-17 is the 5th highest in the nation.[3] The state's 988 helpline received nearly 11,500 calls in May 2026, a 37% increase over the same month in 2025.[4] A persistent workforce shortage negatively impacts our ability to meet the growing demand for care.[5] And while, thankfully, overdose deaths are declining, there were still over 1,300 Marylanders who lost their lives to overdose in 2025.[6]

Again, we recognize the challenging economic environment Maryland faces, we appreciate your commitment to supporting the emotional health and well-being of all Marylanders, and we are eager to work in partnership with your administration to address these issues in a fiscally responsible way. But reducing behavioral health services by this amount and in this manner will only serve to reverse the progress Maryland has made and make it harder for people to access care. **We urge you to reverse these damaging budget reductions.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please direct any questions to Dan Martin at dmartin@mhamd.org.

Sincerely,
Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center
Affiliated Santé
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Maryland Chapter
Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate
Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC)
B'More Clubhouse
CarePoint Response
Carroll County Youth Service Bureau (CCYSB)
Catholic Charities
Chesapeake Voyagers
Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland (CBH)
Community Mental Health CORE of Children's National Hospital

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[1] Maryland General Assembly Hospital Throughput Work Group Final Report. March 2024. https://mhaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/maryland-general-assembly-hospital-throughput-work-group-final-report---march-2024.pdf
[2] Mental Health and Substance Use State Fact Sheets | KFF
[3] Reinert, M, Nguyen, T & Fritze, D. (October 2025). "The State of Mental Health in America 2025." Mental Health America, Alexandria, VA. https://mhanational.org/the-state-of-mental-health-in-america/
[4] Vibrant 988 Reports. https://988lifeline.org/professionals/our-network/state-based-monthly-reports/
[5] Maryland Health Care Commission. Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent. October 2024.
[6] Maryland Department of Health-Behavioral Health Administration, Overdose Data Dashboard

Cornerstone Montgomery
Disability Rights Maryland (DRM)
EveryMind
Gaudenzia
Grassroots Crisis Intervention
Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW)
Health Care for the Homeless
Horizon Foundation
Hudson Behavioral Health
IBR REACH
Inseparable
James' Place
Key Point Health Services
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM)
Maryland Addiction Directors Council (MADC)
Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy (MASDP)
Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD)
Maryland Counseling Association (MCA)
Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine (MDDCSAM)
Maryland Psychological Association (MPA)
Mental Health Association of Frederick County
Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD)
Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland (NAMI Maryland)
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Maryland (NCADD Maryland)
On Our Own of Maryland (OOOMD)
Primary Care Coalition
Pro Bono Counseling
Rock Creek Foundation
Wells House

cc: The Honorable Aruna Miller, Lieutenant Governor
Jake Weissmann, Esq., Secretary of Budget and Management
Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary of Health
Rachel Talley, M.D., Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health
Michael Huber, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Hannah Dier, Deputy Legislative Officer, Office of the Governor
The Honorable Bill Ferguson, Senate President
The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Members, Senate Health and Human Services Subcommittee
Members, House Health and Social Services Subcommittee