



Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health Monthly Updates

August 2021

1. Behavioral Health Integration (BHI)

The Behavioral Health System Integration initiative continues to support the structural and functional integration of behavioral health systems and processes at the jurisdictional and state level.

Functional integration support resulted in 100% of all the LBHAs, CSAs, and LAAs reporting progress on integration of systems functions in the management of the local PBHS.

FY22 activities will focus on:

- ❖ Increasing structural and process integration at the local jurisdiction and State level by 10% for structural integration;
- ❖ Development of the systems management manual;
- ❖ Identification and implementation of pathways to improve processes and systems;
- ❖ Development and implementation of a sustainability plan; and
- ❖ Increasing support for local systems management activities for functional integration, or tight coordination regardless of local agency structure.

2. BHA/MedChi Behavioral Health Webinar Series: Helping the Helpers and Those They Serve

The below August webinars are open for registration. All webinars are from 5:00 - 6:00 pm. Registration for other webinars, which are also on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, are posted on the [BHA/MedChi webinar webpage](#). Webinar recordings and slides are also archived here.

- August 12: **Moral Distress Experienced in Health Care.**
Suzanne J. Best, BSN, MS, RN. Moderator: Chaplain Dennis Dupont.
[Register here.](#)
- August 26: **Effective Self-Help Strategies and When Therapy is Still Needed.**
Alexander Chan, PhD, LMFT. Moderator: TBD.
[Register here.](#)

3. BHA Quality Initiatives

The Office of Evidence-based Practices, Housing and Recovery Supports of the Clinical Division is developing a plan to improve the quality of services in Residential Rehabilitation Programs (RRP). The plan includes training with a targeted audience of staff from psychiatric residential rehabilitation programs, development of further guidance for monitoring of the residential rehabilitation providers by the Local Behavioral Health Authorities and Core Service Agencies, and review and training focused on the Critical Incident Process.

The fidelity team (Evidence-based Practices) has submitted a proposal for review with the goal of resuming Assertive Community and Supported Employment fidelity assessments for providers who have achieved fidelity in the past. The fidelity team is recommending the first



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visit post COVID to these providers not be tied to the enhanced rate but instead focus on quality and needs of the teams and establish a post pandemic baseline to move forward. The fidelity team completed two quality reviews of Assertive Community Treatment teams in the month of July. Those reports are pending but will provide data and insight on the impact of the pandemic on Assertive Community Treatment Teams in Maryland.

4. Crisis System Workgroup

- ❖ On July 21st, BHA had the opportunity to present at the statewide Mental Health Association's Crisis System Forum. Over 90 community stakeholders attended this event which gave BHA an opportunity to showcase and discuss the Maryland Crisis System model.
- ❖ On July 23rd, BHA met with the New York Family Services League serving Long Island. The Family Services League has been using a Care Traffic Control software platform over the past several years to screen and triage services for people in crisis, and to effectively monitor data and outcomes. The Care Traffic Control platform is in alignment with BHA's crisis system and is being developed through the GBRICS initiative.
- ❖ BHA held an initial meeting with the Maryland Medicaid Administration to begin exploring opportunities for Medicaid funding of the Maryland Crisis System. With BHA's input, the Maryland Medicaid Administration submitted a Letter of Intent to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services for a State Planning Grant for mobile crisis services. The purpose of the funding opportunity is to support states in planning for 1115 demonstrations, 1915(b) or 1915(c) waiver program requests (or amendments) to provide qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services under the Medicaid program. The grant application is due August 13th and can fund up to \$1M.
- ❖ The Crisis System - Best Practices/Standardization Subcommittee met on July 27th with stakeholders to discuss HB332 (Confidentiality and Alternative Destinations for Emergency Evaluations). Stakeholders are beginning to explore the use of crisis walk-in/stabilization centers as a designated psychiatric emergency facility.

5. Dangerousness Standards

Over the last several months, BHA, and state and community partners have been meeting to better define the language of involuntary civil commitment. The purpose of the meetings was to review national best practices on involuntary civil commitment and develop recommendations to provide greater clarity to Maryland's civil commitment definition.

The stakeholders dedicated time to actively participate in discussions, explore the many facets of this complex issue, and develop recommendations. From the meetings, three



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recommendations emerged: (1) Refine the definition of the dangerousness standard in regulations; (2) Provide comprehensive training around the dangerousness standard; (3) Gather additional data elements about civil commitment.

BHA is currently seeking public comment about the report through various stakeholders such as the Behavioral Health Advisory Council, Mental Health Association (Behavioral Health Coalition), NAMI and On Our Own. Feedback, can be directed to Marian Bland - Marian.bland@maryland.gov or Sharon Lipford - Sharon.lipford@maryland.gov.

6. Multi-Agency Opioid Overdose Death Prevention Strategy Team

- a. BHA's Dr James Yoe presented the DORM report findings.
- b. Participants learned of plans for allocation of SATP supplemental block grant funding from COVID Relief and ARPA funding opportunities.

7. New Guidance

- a. [7-21-21 UPDATE: How to Increase COVID-19 Vaccination Acceptance Rates](#)
- b. Governor's press release August 5, 2021
(<https://governor.maryland.gov/2021/08/05/governor-hogan-announces-new-vaccination-protocols-for-state-employees/>)

8. Racial Disparities Task Force

Next meeting is scheduled for August 18th - the Task Force is on track to identify the final recommendations to the IACC by March 2022 and will complete their final report by August 2022.

9. 9-8-8 Updates

The 9-8-8 Planning Grant deadline for the draft of the 9-8-8 implementation plan has been extended to September 30, 2021 (from August 30, 2021). Deadline for final plan submission to SAMHSA has been extended from December 30, 2021 to January 30, 2022. The Planning Coalition has two more scheduled meetings, one in August and one in September to finalize the draft plan.