



April 6, 2015

Dear Governor Hogan:

The many organizations comprising the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition applauded the passage of bipartisan budget legislation by the Maryland House of Delegates and Senate that restored some of the recent cuts to mental health and substance use disorder services. As you know, Marylanders affected by mental health and substance use disorders must have high quality and accessible services to meet their needs.

We were pleased to see \$2 million included in last week's supplemental budget to address substance use disorders as part of your laudable effort to combat the growing challenges with heroin and opioid use disorders in our state. We thank you for that.

We also understand that there are major public policy decisions being discussed as part of the remaining budget negotiations – mostly revolving around education and tax relief. We are writing today to respectfully request including the remaining funds that the legislature marked for behavioral health services in a supplemental budget. These funds include:

- \$6.5 million to maintain the current community mental health provider rates (the FY 2015 rate).
- Partially restoring rate reductions in Medicaid for psychiatric evaluation and management rates.

This crucial funding for health providers and caregivers is not related to the broader education and tax relief issues being discussed and should not be caught in those negotiations. Healthcare providers are making decisions right now that affect the level of care they can provide during the coming fiscal year and each day of uncertainty negatively impacts their capacity to serve our community.

We need your support to help "keep the door open" to vital services for these most vulnerable Marylanders. One in five residents in our state – more than one million Marylanders – lives with a behavioral health condition.

Marylanders support behavioral health care and will support your decisive budget action to restore cuts to these critical services. In February, our "Keep the Door Open Maryland" rally on Lawyers Mall drew more than 300 attendees on a cold winter day. Our recent petition to restore funding includes more than 2,200 Maryland voters from across the state.

Please support our efforts to provide quality behavioral health care to the Marylanders who need it by appropriating the remaining behavioral health budget funding in the state legislature's bipartisan budget.

Sincerely,

The Behavioral Health Coalition

cc: Joe Getty, Chief Legislative Officer
David Brinkley, Secretary of Budget and Management

The Behavioral Health Coalition of Maryland is a diverse mix of more than 40 non-governmental organizations working together to ensure individuals affected by mental health and substance use disorders have high quality and accessible services for their needs. www.keepthedooropenmd.org

Contact: Dan Martin, Mental Health Association of Maryland, dmartin@mhamd.org, 410-978-8865