

# The Mental Health Safety Net Coalition



**Alliance of Community Service Providers**  
**Aspire Child & Family Services**  
**Bedford-Somerset Developmental & Behavioral Health Services**  
**Bell Socialization Services**  
**The Bradley Center**  
**Brooke Glen Behavioral Hospital**  
**Chester County Department of MH/IDD**  
**Children First**  
**Children's Home of Reading (CHOR)**  
**Children's Service Center of Wyoming Valley, Inc.**  
**Clarion Psychiatric Center**  
**Community Services Group**  
**County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania**  
**Eleos Health**  
**Family Services of Northwest Pennsylvania**  
**Chestnut Ridge Counseling, Inc.**  
**Institute for Behavioral Change (IBC)**  
**Intercommunity Action, Inc.**  
**Fairmont Behavioral Health Systems**  
**Friends Hospital**  
**Foundations Behavioral Health**  
**Haven Behavioral Hospital of Eastern Pennsylvania**  
**Haven Behavioral Hospital of Philadelphia**  
**Haven Behavioral Hospital of Philadelphia**  
**Horsham Clinic**  
**Lancaster Behavioral Health Hospital**  
**MAX Association**  
**Meadows Psychiatric Center**  
**Merakey**  
**PA Council of Children Youth & Family Services (PCCYFS)**  
**Philadelphia Mental Health Care Corporation (PMHCC)**  
**Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA)**  
**Renewal, Inc.**

## State-Funded Adult County MH Services

**Issue:** County community mental health services are under enormous stress and often are no longer able to meet the needs of their communities. While inadequate funding has been the norm over the past decade, the COVID-19 pandemic has served to accelerate and deepen these challenges. The status quo is not sustainable. The Mental Health Safety Net Coalition urges the General Assembly to increase the proposed new investment in county mental health services funding from \$20 million to \$100 million for the FY 2025-26 Budget. Rebuilding our state governed, county administered mental health system will require a multi-year, sustained effort with annual increases in funding to help ensure Pennsylvanians receive needed mental health services in the right setting and at the right time.

### Consequences — Lack of Sustainable Funding:

For Pennsylvanians with a mental illness, the impact of the county funding shortfalls is already evident, with shortages of key mental health professionals, chronic underpayment of mental health providers, reductions/closures in mental health residential programs and supportive services such as employment and psychiatric rehabilitation services, uneven crisis response services, closure of outpatient programs, and the continuing criminalization of mental illness. Across the Commonwealth, there is no consistent level of mental health services available, and access to critical services largely depends on which county you live in.

The failure to invest in county mental health services is resulting in higher costs to the Commonwealth in other systems like Medicaid, law enforcement, corrections, state-operated mental health hospitals, and community hospital emergency departments. The Commonwealth's mental health system is out of balance and all too often lacks the capacity to intervene with the right service, in the right setting, and at the right time. As a result, the norm has become responding when people are in crisis and in the most expensive settings, whether it be an emergency department, inpatient hospitalization, or even worse, jail.

While we understand the difficulty of making new investments in the current budget environment, the failure to provide the necessary community based mental health services will result in higher costs from both a fiscal and human standpoint. This is truly a case of "pay me now or pay me later". We urge you to increase funding for county-based in the FY 2025/26 budget.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Sharp.

Sincerely,  
The Mental Health Safety Net Coalition

**Roxbury Treatment Center**  
**Stairways Behavioral Health**  
**Strawberry Fields Inc.**  
**True North Wellness**  
**UPMC**  
**Westmoreland**  
**Casemanagement and**  
**Supports, Inc.**