



May 13, 2019

Governor Wolf
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

We are seeking your intervention to assure that thousands of Pennsylvania citizens diagnosed with substance use disorders, including opiate addiction, and/or serious mental illness are not put at further risk by poor transition planning. Federal funding for a two-year pilot program being managed by the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) is likely not going to be renewed beyond June 30 and we urgently need your help.

By way of background, Pennsylvania is one of only eight states selected to receive funding to create and implement the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) initiative. We represent the six agencies that made significant investments and met the rigorous qualifications that ultimately led to Pennsylvania's successful bid to attain this funding. The commitment and work of our organizations resulted in bringing millions of dollars in federal revenue into the Commonwealth and demonstrating that Pennsylvania is a national leader in the fields of addiction treatment and mental health services.

We were only recently informed by OMHSAS that Pennsylvania essentially has no sustainability plan for us to continue this critical work. Instead, OMHSAS recently directed each agency to craft a solution with their local managed care organization, but with no additional funding being allocated to those entities. To expect dramatic changes to be thoughtfully planned, negotiated, and implemented between now and June 30, 2019 is unrealistic and deeply concerning. **Some elements of care for this extremely vulnerable population may need to be reduced or stopped. Additionally, staff will be laid off and our organizations may be left with financial losses that will create additional stress on a system that already cannot meet the full demand for treatment in Pennsylvania.**

We understand and accept that we will need to adjust to the probable loss of federal funding. However, given everything that is at stake as listed above, we asked Pennsylvania OMHSAS in writing to identify and secure short-term transition funding so that we can minimize risk to the citizens we serve, the community, our staff, and our organizations. We learned late last week that this request has been denied. We urge you to use the power of your office to intervene and support our request for what is a small amount of funding in the context of the state budget. **Specifically, we ask to remain funded through the end of the calendar year to assure ample time for developing alternative supports and services and that no one falls through the cracks.**

The CCBHC funding has allowed for significant improvements to the behavioral health system, including increased access to Medication Assisted Treatment, the gold standard in treating opioid addiction; increased access to all other behavioral health care; and decreased waiting time from the request for services to receiving treatment. Additionally, participating in the CCBHC initiative has positioned our organizations — and Pennsylvania — to better address the complex social determinants of health, improve access to care, and integrate physical and behavioral health services. These have been demonstrated as successful strategies in reducing the total cost of care over time, which is both a more compassionate approach to service delivery and good public policy.

We are available to provide additional information on the impact CCBHC services have had across many communities in Pennsylvania. We thank you for your time and support of this important and groundbreaking work and hope that Pennsylvania can make a small investment in preserving some of the significant gains made possible through this CCBHC project.

Sincerely,

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