



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Behavioral Health Administration

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November 8, 2021

Dear Behavioral Health Partners:

I bring you greetings on behalf of the BHA team. As the year quickly comes to an end, and we prepare to enter the season of Thanksgiving, we hope you take some time to pause and reflect on the people, places, and things you are most grateful for. BHA certainly remains grateful for the partnership we have with you, and the support you have shown this administration. We remain grateful for the services you provide to your patients, consumers, and stakeholders, and wish you the warmest of holiday seasons.

On November 2nd, MDH was pleased to be able to announce a **Medicaid Rate Increase** for home and community-based services (HCBS) providers. Maryland is implementing the following rate increases:

- A 5.4 percent rate increase for most HCBS behavioral health and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) providers
- A 5.2 percent rate increase for community-based long-term services and support providers

It is expected that these rate increases will be used to strengthen the services that you provide. Of note, BHA is maintaining parity for all community-based providers for the service areas that received a Medicaid increase. Please see the press release for more specific details and links to additional information.

Recently, we provided an opportunity for you to participate in our fourth **Provider COVID-19 Survey**. These surveys help BHA measure the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the consumer community and help enable us to remain responsive to continually changing community needs. The results of the survey will be available in mid-December and will be posted on our website, [Pages - bha-covid-19 \(maryland.gov\)](#). We extended the deadline to November 15, 2021, in order to increase the number of responses. Please take a few moments to share this important information with us. The link to the survey is [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Maryland Behavioral Health COVID Fall 2021](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Maryland_Behavioral_Health_COVID_Fall_2021),

November is **National Family Caregivers Month**, which provides an opportunity for us to honor family members who freely give their support in helping their loved ones regain wellness and an improved quality of life. It is a time for us to bring awareness to caregiver issues and educate communities to rally support for them. We applaud the self-sacrificing commitment of family caregivers and recognize that family support is key to helping individuals with behavioral health disorders recover and achieve greater success in their lives and communities. As recognition of National Family Caregivers Month, the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) is presenting "Voices of Experience: Living Well with Mental Illness" on

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November 22nd at 7:00 pm. You can obtain more information by contacting them at connect@nami-md.org.

On November 11th, our nation celebrates **Veterans Day**. Throughout our communities, we come together as a nation to honor those who have served and are currently serving in the military. We also honor the families who continue to share their loved ones in service to our Nation. As a behavioral health community, let us remain vigilant to identifying the silent wounds of our nation's veterans and family members, and ever-increasing accessibility to services to support them in their processes of recovery. The [RAND Center for Military Health Policy Research](#) reported that 20 percent of veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan have either major depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, and that 19.5 percent of those with these diagnoses have also experienced a traumatic brain injury. Substance-related disorders among veterans are strongly connected to their exposure to combat. The COVID pandemic brought on additional behavioral health challenges for veterans as well as the general population. In collaboration with the Veterans Administration and Local Behavioral Health Authorities, Maryland's Commitment to Veterans program will bring greater awareness to behavioral health services and offer a confidential forum for Veterans to discuss issues and challenges and help connect veteran participants to resources during the month of November.

As I close, this year more than any other, we may feel the need to come together to encourage hope and give thanks for those that have touched our lives. If we continue to follow CDC guidelines to keep ourselves safe, this year's Thanksgiving can be celebrated with those we love. If you are not yet vaccinated, please get vaccinated, encourage others to get vaccinated, and [strongly encourage](#) all eligible Marylanders to get their booster shot. You may contact 1-855-MDGOVAX (855-634-6829) to schedule your vaccine appointment today. The vaccines are safe and effective and our only way to render our communities, workplaces, and the places we play safe for all.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,



Aliya Jones, M.D., MBA
Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health