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The Mental Health America of Indiana Newsletter



Mental Health America of Indiana is Indiana's leading mental health and substance use advocacy organization. We are dedicated to providing overall mental wellness and recovery for all Hoosiers.

A Letter from the President

Legislative Session Policy Update
2025 Legislative Session Preview



Stay IN. the Behavioral Health News



The 2025 Indiana Legislative Session Begins This Week!

As the 2025 legislative session convenes this week,, **Mental Health America of Indiana (MHAI)** is dedicated to addressing the pressing mental health and Medicaid challenges facing Hoosiers. Together, we can influence policy decisions that prioritize mental health care accessibility, Medicaid reform, and enhanced behavioral health services through Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic's.

CCBHC's and 988 will provide the cornerstone of Indiana's healthcare system, especially for behavioral health services supporting vulnerable populations. However, significant barriers—such as workforce shortages, reimbursement challenges, and fragmented care models—hinder its full potential.

To address these issues, MHAI is exploring the current Medicaid landscape and evaluating innovative approaches, including **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)**, to integrate behavioral and physical health care effectively. The **policy recommendations below** demonstrate how Medicaid reform can improve health outcomes and resolve systemic inefficiencies.

- Recommendations from the 2024 Behavioral Health Commission Report:**
- 1. Enhance the 988 Crisis Response System and Expand CCBHC's Action:**
 - Increase Community Mental Health Fund appropriation to sustain the 988 system and CCBHCs.
 - Estimated Costs:** \$100M for SFY 2026 and \$120M for SFY 2027.
- 2. Enact Mental Health Parity Legislation**
 - Require parity in reimbursement indexed to Medicare rates.
 - Increase enforcement authority of the Indiana Department of Insurance.
- 3. Expand Behavioral Health Workforce**
 - Sustain funding for psychiatry residency programs.
 - End collaborative practice agreements between APRNs and physicians to increase workforce capacity.
 - Secure sustainable funding for **Be Happy** and **CHAMP** programs to support primary care providers in mental health care.
- 4. Support First Responder Mental Health and Resiliency Training**
 - Fund ongoing mental health and resiliency training for law enforcement and first responders.
- 5. Address Barriers to Licensure**
 - Streamline licensure processes and reduce redundancies.
 - Allocate funding to improve licensure infrastructure and reduce delays.
- 6. Strengthen the Talent Pipeline**
 - Introduce a state income tax credit for behavioral health professionals who provide training and supervision.
 - Incorporate behavioral health into high school graduation pathways and workforce strategies.
- 7. Expand Services for Children**
 - Increase multi-systemic therapy programs and school mental health frameworks.
 - Improve education on developmental stages and enhance staff qualifications.
- 8. Enhance Care for Older Adults**
 - Standardize data collection and develop integrated medical and psychiatric services for older adults.
- 9. Improve Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**
 - Create joint waivers for dual diagnosis services.
 - Address workforce titles and roles for this population.
- 10. Sustain and Expand Community Mental Health Fund Investments**
 - Maintain funding for the Community Mental Health Fund.
 - Explore new funding sources for long-term sustainability.

2025 Indiana Legislative Session Opportunities

Behavioral health challenges in Indiana have reached **critical levels**, with over 1.1 million Hoosiers experiencing mental health conditions annually. Medicaid, as the primary funder for behavioral health services, is central to resolving these challenges.

- Challenges with Medicaid**
- Reimbursement Rates:** Misaligned with actual service costs, discouraging provider participation—especially in rural and underserved areas.
 - Workforce Shortages:** Strain on service capacity and accessibility.
 - Fragmented Care Models:** Barriers to holistic, integrated care.
 - Vulnerable Populations:** Disproportionately affected, with limited access to timely care and worsening disparities.
- MHAI supports the following solutions to address these systemic issues:

- Funding for Crisis Continuum Services**
- Enhanced 988 Crisis Support:** Build a dedicated funding stream to sustain mobile crisis teams and call center capacity.
 - Youth Crisis Services:** Expand crisis services tailored to adolescents.
 - Medicaid Innovations:** Integrate behavioral and physical health care through policies, including **Collaborative Care Models**.


- Behavioral Health Workforce Development**
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to attract and retain providers.
 - Establish loan forgiveness programs for behavioral health professionals and peer recovery specialists.
 - Expand training pipelines to include peer recovery specialists and care coordinators.

Medicaid is a lifeline for over **745,000 Hoosiers** diagnosed with mental health or substance use disorders. However, its impact is limited by inefficiencies and misaligned funding. Through strategic reform and investment, Medicaid can evolve into a comprehensive enabler of care, addressing behavioral health disparities and improving outcomes across Indiana.

Follow us along this session as Mental Health America of Indiana will be tracking ALL of the behavioral health legislation you will care about this year.

Sign Up For Action Alerts

Join Us for the LARGEST Mental Health Advocacy Event of the Year!



Hoosier Idol '25

4.9.25

The Battle of The Caucuses

Join us for Hoosier Idol Dinner on April 9, 2025 6 - 9 P.M. at the Indiana Roof Ballroom!
Contact Kelly Hudkins at kgawin@mhainet to register or reserve a table.
Hoosier Idol Dinner Sponsorship: \$1,000 Includes 10 tickets for the event

Save the date! Join us on April 9, 2025, from 6–9 PM at the Indiana Roof Ballroom. Registration opens soon, and tickets are expected to sell out quickly—be sure to secure yours early!