



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

Behavioral Health Administration

Lisa A. Burgess, M.D., Acting
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55 Wade Avenue, SGHC/Voc. Rehab Bldg.
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June 10, 2022

Dear Behavioral Health Partners:

I hope everyone had a good Memorial Day weekend. The weekend provided an opportunity to pay tribute to those we know personally, and those we do not know, who have given so much to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today through their dedication and willingness to serve.

During these last few weeks and months, our country has experienced several mass shootings. These events have and continue to have a traumatic effect on our communities. Senseless violent acts are heartbreaking and devastating. We are left grieving and at risk of feeling hopeless, angry, and fearful. These events touch us all in some way with notably increasing levels of anxiety and stress. Yet, we must somehow persevere and band together to help ourselves and our communities find hope during these difficult and challenging times.

I want to reassure everyone that we as a mental health community can be the beacon of light to our communities. The attached document has identified resources that may be valuable for those individuals and/or families seeking help with behavioral health challenges. Please share these resources with your patients and your networks to help connect our communities to needed services and supports.

June is **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Month (PTSD)**. It is an opportunity for us to help bring greater awareness of PTSD and identify the resources to help individuals get the help they may need. As a result of the trauma exposure we have experienced personally or through the media coverage on these mass shootings as well as the ongoing war in Ukraine, there is no better time to bring awareness to PTSD. In addition to the resource information attached, a good resource that identifies PTSD symptoms can be found at [NIMH » Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(nih.gov\)](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml).

Monthly Message to BH Partners
June 10, 2022

June is also **Pride Month**. It is celebrated every year to honor what happened at Stonewall in 1969, and celebrate the impact the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community has had on history. This month also spotlights the efforts to achieve justice and more equitable distribution of resources for the LGBTQ community. Among these individuals, behavioral health takes a devastating toll:

- According to a Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law [report](#), 17% of LGB adults attempted suicide during their lifetime, compared with 2.4% of the general U.S. population (2016):
- 40% of transgender adults attempted suicide during their lifetime (2015):
<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/suicidality-transgender-adults/>
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/youth/>

Every Maryland resident should have equitable access to improved health, wellness, and quality of life across their lifespan. As the second year as a federal holiday, **Juneteenth**, which is on June 19th, we are reminded to never take our freedom for granted, and further our work to build an equitable society. Juneteenth marks the freedom of all enslaved Black people in the United States of America. It is also known as Freedom Day or Jubilee Day. This holiday can serve as a tribute to this country's African Americans. I value your continued partnership in these efforts.

Finally, I want to thank you for your commitment during these times and meeting these latest challenges without reluctance. Your ongoing support and continued partnership will contribute greatly to the healing of our communities. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Lisa A. Burgess, M.D.
Acting Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health