



## Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health Monthly Updates

November 2021

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

Thank you to everyone who provided comments/ideas about potential reinvestment strategies/priorities to us. Survey responses are being accepted through November 15, 2021. [Stakeholder FMAP Reinvestment Ideas \(google.com\)](#)

- **BHA/MedChi Behavioral Health Webinar Series: Helping the Helpers and Those They Serve**

- There is one final webinar this year. Please see below. Registration for future webinars, which are on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, will be posted on the [BHA/MedChi webinar webpage](#), where webinar recordings and slides are also archived.

- i. November 11: No Webinar Due to Veterans Day.

- ii. November 25: No Webinar Due to Thanksgiving.

- iii. December 9: **Coping with the Behavioral Health Impact of the Pandemic.**  
Alex Chan, PhD. Moderator: Stephanie Slowly, MSW, LCSW-C.  
[Register here.](#)

- iv. December 23: No Webinar Due to the Holidays.

- **Behavioral Health Equity Workgroup**

The next Behavioral Health Equity Committee Lunch & Learn series will be held November 19, 2021 from 12:00-1:30 p.m.

- **COVID Provider Survey No. 4**

MDH issued its fourth survey related to COVID-19 and client care on November 8, 2021. This survey, which you can still respond to [here](#), will provide BHA with valuable information about client access to services, telehealth, and wellness. We have extended the date to provide responses to November 15.

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Update**

- Please see the [November 3, 2021 COVID-19 Vaccine Providers' Bulletin](#) for the latest information about 5-11 vaccine and booster shot eligibility.

- The CDC recently added additional behavioral health disorders to its list of [Underlying Medical Conditions Associated with Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19](#). Individuals with conditions listed are eligible to receive a COVID-19 booster shot. Substance use disorders were previously listed., Mood disorders, including depression, schizophrenia, and schizophrenia spectrum disorders, have been added.

- **COVID Vaccination Information Survey**

The deadline has been extended to November 15, 2021.



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[The provider vaccine administration information form](#) is for all programs to assess resources and technical assistance needs. To support providers' targeted outreach efforts to unvaccinated clients, MDH can set up vaccine clinics and/or mobile vaccination teams on-site or at a nearby facility to expand access to COVID-19 vaccines to the hardest-hit and highest-risk communities.

- **COVID-19 Updates with Public Health Webinars**

- **Held Every Other Friday from 10:00 am to 11:00 am, next on Friday November 12th.**  
The presentation by Rebecca Perlmutter, MPH, will include information on the emergency regulations CMS issued requiring COVID-19 vaccination by January 4th of health care workers and other eligible staff at specific health care facilities that participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, as referenced above. Here is the webinar information to join, but to be added to the calendar invite contact [ivajean.smith@maryland.gov](mailto:ivajean.smith@maryland.gov).

- **Next Webinar:**

Session number: 178 873 7910  
Session password: K9Fp2D2hPNP

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1. Go to  
<https://mdhealth.webex.com/mdhealth/k2/j.php?MTID=t4fd2d9341eb2218059aa0282490f5fcfe>
  2. Enter your name and email address.
  3. Enter the session password: K9Fp2D2hPNP
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Access code: 178 873 7910

- **Crisis System Workgroup**

- Work has begun on the implementation of the newly awarded CMS State Planning Grant. This grant will help Maryland integrate community-based mobile crisis intervention services into the Medicaid programs.



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- There are three Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) opportunities continue building the crisis system: Peers in Urgent Care Centers (released in late October), Care Traffic Control System and Expansion of Urgent Care Centers (due for release in mid-November).
- **The Racial Disparities in Overdose Task Force**
  - If you are interested in joining a task force workgroup, please reach out to Marianne Gibson at [marianne.gibson@maryland.gov](mailto:marianne.gibson@maryland.gov).
  - Workgroup focal areas:
    - i. Identifying data-informed interventions and innovative/emerging projects
    - ii. Decreasing structural determinants of drug use
    - iii. Increasing acceptance of EBPs
    - iv. Ensuring equitable allocation of resources
- **Suicide Prevention**
  - The 33rd Annual Suicide Prevention Conference was on October 6th and a success with over 366 attendees. The theme for the conference was Recognizing, Responding, and Recovering.
  - The Office of Suicide Prevention is working on youth suicide prevention initiatives that include: a toolkit for adults that work with youth, youth social media messaging, a mental health focused text based caring contacts service called MD Young Minds (modeled after MD Mindhealth) and other trainings.
  - The office also participated in the [AFSP Out of the Darkness Walk in Howard County](#) on Saturday, October 23rd. This is an overnight event that is for those affected by suicide and those that support them - raise awareness and much-needed funds, strongly sending a message that suicide is preventable, and that no one is alone.
- **Clozapine Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS)**
  - The [FDA alert on modifications to the Clozapine REMS system](#) on July 29, 2021 indicated that by November 15, 2021 all prescribers and pharmacies using the system must be recertified, or they will no longer be able to prescribe/dispense clozapine.
  - Prescribers must also re-enroll their patients. If applicable and not already done, please see the FDA alert for what to do, so patients can continue to receive this important medication.
- **Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Webinars and Upcoming Conference -**

BHA will be hosting several webinars for PATH providers:



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- November 17th - Best Practices in Outreach and Engagement
- November 30th - Introduction to Housing First
- December 8th - PATH Data Collection
- January 19, 2022 - PATH Conference

More details are forthcoming.