

HEALING FOR THE HEALERS: YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADVOCACY DAY

Policy Priorities



Medicaid Reimbursement Rates

Reimbursement rates for behavioral health services must be increased this year to ensure the **45% of children** in Virginia who are enrolled in Medicaid for health insurance coverage have access to mental health providers, and to ensure those providers can adequately compensate their staff. Only **14% of children** on Medicaid are receiving mental health services, a significant gap from the need expressed in the general population of children and youth, where 30% or more young people express mental health concerns.

Policy Priorities: Budget Amendments

- **Medicaid Reimbursement Rates for Community-Based Behavioral Health Services (\$38.7 million GF)**
 - **Item 304 #23h (Fariss) & Item 304 #9s (Deeds):** Rates must keep pace with inflation and ensure adequate staff compensation. Short-term solution will be to increase community behavioral health services rates in FY24. Long-term solution will be to conduct a rate study to determine inputs to delivering care and suggest a process for annual rate increases based on inflation.
- **Medicaid Rate Studies for Behavioral Health (\$225,000 GF)**
 - **Item 308 #11h (Brewer) & Item 308 #7s (McClellan):** Rates must be modernized for school-based mental health. Students and school-based stakeholders must be involved in the design of school-based services. Long-term solution will be to conduct a rate study on school-based mental health services to replace the service currently offered, Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT).

Insurance Credentialing

To effectively address the youth mental health crisis, Virginia must reduce unnecessary regulatory and administrative burdens on mental health providers. Fixing the insurance provider credentialing process will increase access to mental health services for youth across Virginia.

Policy Priorities: Budget Amendments

- **Health insurance; provider credentialing; processing of new applications**
 - **HB 2262 (Hodges) & SB 1154 (Mason):** Requires health insurance carriers to establish protocols and procedures for processing new provider credentialing applications, including: approving or denying new provider credentialing applications within 60 days of receipt, providing notice to new provider applicants that their application is received and complete, and requiring payment no later than 30 days after application approval for services that are rendered from the date the new provider applicant's completed credentialing application is provided to the carrier for consideration.

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School-Based Mental Health Services

Children in Virginia are in a mental health crisis, with more than half of middle and high school students indicating that they feel nervous, anxious, or on edge and more than 10% of students contemplating suicide.

Policy Priorities: Governor's Budget

- Support the Governor's proposed budget to expand school-based mental health services **(\$15 million)**
- Support the Governor's proposed budget to provide more student telehealth services on college campuses and in schools **(\$9 million)**

Policy Priorities: Bills & Budget Amendments

- **Public education; student mental health and counseling, definitions, licensure requirements | SB 1043 (McPike)**
- **Public schools; school counselors with training or experience in mental health, staffing ratios | HB 1938 (Plum)**
- **HB 1938 - School Counselors with Mental Health Training (\$62.9 million GF) | Item 137 #7h (Plum)**
- **Additional School Counselors (Ratio 1:250 = \$58.8 million GF/ Ratio 1:300 = \$16.6 million GF) | Item 137 #14h (VanValkenburg) & Item 137 #23s (Petersen)**

Crisis Mental Health Services

The ideal system offers young people mental health support when and where they need it. As Virginia builds out crisis response and stabilization services, we must ensure services are designed for the developmental needs of children and youth, available in every region, and provide adequate resources to build the capacity of the system.

Policy Priorities: Governor's Budget

- Support the Governor's proposed budget to increase funding for a comprehensive crisis services system **(\$58,345,204)**
- Support the Governor's proposed budget to pursue hospital-based psychiatric emergency alternatives **(\$20 million)**
- Support the Governor's proposed budget to provide one-time funds for mobile crisis units **(\$20 million)**

Policy Priorities: Bills & Budget Amendments

- **Health insurance; mental health benefits; coverage for mobile crisis response services | HB 2216 (Leftwich) & SB 1347 (Cosgrove)**
- **Children's Behavioral Health Services (\$8.4 million GF) | Item 313 #1h (Price) & Item 313 #6h (Seibold) & Item 313 #3s (Favola) | Item 313 #5h (Rasoul): language only**
- **Staffing for Crisis Stabilization Units (\$2.5 million GF) | Item 313 #11h (Hope) & Item 313 #4s (Deeds)**