

MAMH's FY24 State Budget Behavioral Health Priorities



MAMH's budget requests reflect our diverse priorities in the areas of *access to care, workforce, housing, legal system reform, and substance use*, as well as our commitment to addressing the needs of special populations including *youth, older adults, and refugees*. With our advocacy partners, MAMH urges investment in promotion and prevention initiatives, ensuring access to evidence-based treatment, and expanding recovery supports and services.

Access to Care

\$500K for a study using data collected by the Center for Information and Analysis (CHIA) to evaluate private carrier payment for Behavioral Health for Children and Adolescents (BHCA) services (CHIA 4100-0060)

With the [Children's Mental Health Campaign](#), MAMH seeks funding for the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) to research a concern that youth with private insurance are not receiving certain community-based behavioral health intermediate care services, known as BHCA services, despite the growing need for such services.

\$19M, a \$15M increase in funding over FY23 GAA, for the Emergency Department (ED) Diversion Program for Adults (DMH 5046-0000: Adult Mental Health and Supports Services)

MAMH requests an increase to expand mobile and site-based respite services to address the ongoing problem of adult ED boarding, evidenced by the 407 adult patients who were boarding in Massachusetts acute care hospital EDs and medical-surgical units as of January 17, 2023¹. Respite is a supportive and therapeutic alternative in the community.

\$1.3M for Behavioral Health Urgent Care for Youth (EOHHS accounts)

MAMH requests this funding to provide an upstream intervention to address the problem of child and adolescent ED boarding. This funding would allow five additional Community Behavioral Health Centers to establish K-12 public school partnerships for the provision of behavioral health urgent care for students.

Increased funding for Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention (YMCI) to Expand Capacity by 20% (EOHHS accounts)

MAMH requests an increase in YMCI as an upstream response to the problem of child and adolescent ED boarding. YMCI needs increased funding because, currently, most YMCI teams lack the capacity to handle more than one emergency at a time.

\$450K to fund a landscape analysis of peer-led outreach and voluntary community-based services and supports for hard-to-reach adults and to implement a pilot of the consensus model identified in that analysis (DMH 5046-0000: Adult Mental Health Services and Supports)

MAMH requests funding so that DMH and an organization led by peers with behavioral health living experience can contract for a study of peer-led and operated programs to engage individuals who are declining mental health services and supports and can initiate a pilot of a consensus model.

\$2M for a minimum of three new DMH-contracted peer respite programs, one in each of the three DMH service areas currently without a peer-respite program (DMH 5046-0000: Adult Mental Health Services and Supports)

¹ MA Health and Hospital Association. Capturing a Crisis: Massachusetts Behavioral Health Boarding Metrics. 17 January 2023, <https://mhalink.informz.net/mhalink/data/images/20230117%20Behavioral%20Health%20Report.pdf>.

MAMH requests this funding for a minimum of three new DMH-contracted peer respite programs, one in each of the three DMH service areas currently without a peer-respite program. Peer respite programs are peer-staffed, short-term, overnight facilities that allow for diversion from the ED for individuals in crisis with psychiatric conditions.

Funding for the Division of Insurance (DOI) to expand the Health Care Access Bureau's mental health parity enforcement capacity (DOI 7006-0029: Health Care Access Bureau)

MAMH seeks additional funding for the Division of Insurance (DOI) to expand the capacity of its Health Care Access Bureau to enforce state and federal mental health parity provisions, including those enacted in [Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022](#).

Workforce

Funding to increase rates for behavioral health and human services providers so that employee salaries can be benchmarked to the 75th percentile of Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics baseline salaries (EOHHS 1599-6903: Chapter 257 and Human Services Reserve)

With our partners, MAMH requests funding to increase rates for behavioral health and human services providers so that their employees' salaries can be benchmarked to the 75th percentile of Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics baseline salaries. This funding is necessary to ensure that behavioral health workforce compensation is competitive.

Housing

\$20.548M, a \$8M increase in funding for the Department of Mental Health Rental Subsidy Program and clarifying language in the budget narrative (DMH RSP) (DHCD 7004-9033: Rental Subsidy Program for DMH Clients)

MAMH requests increased funding to address the projected demand for housing in FY24 among people with severe and disabling mental health conditions. The increased need is based on the substantial number of people with such conditions who, in the absence of affordable and supported community-based housing, are stuck, in hospitals, EDs, nursing homes, and on the streets.

\$27.616M, a \$3M increase in funding for the Safe Haven Program (DMH 5046-2000: Statewide Homelessness Support Services)

MAMH requests increased funding of this program to establish six new Safe Haven programs, for a full year. Such funding will help ensure geographically equitable access to the Safe Haven program, which serves individuals who are chronically unhoused with severe and often co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions.

Legal System Reform

\$2.5M to implement the pilot of the Middlesex County Restoration Center (EOHHS 4000-0300)

MAMH requests funding to support the establishment of the Middlesex County Restoration Center, which will support ongoing law enforcement diversionary efforts across New England's most populous county while also expanding the community capacity for mental health and substance use treatment. The Center will serve as a model for future centers across the state. The center is slated to open in 2023.

\$3.6M for Equitable Approaches to Public Safety (EAPS) (DPH 4512-2020" Municipal Public Safety Reform)

MAMH seeks increased funding for the EAPS program, which gives grants to municipalities to expand non-police responses to mental health crises. These interventions both promote equitable public safety and public health outcomes and take advantage of new or enhanced forms of crisis response: the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, the Behavioral Health Help Line, and Mobile Crisis Intervention.

Funding to Conduct an Independent Expert Review Suicide Risk and Prevention Strategies in Jails and Prisons (EOHHS & EOPPS accounts)

MAMH seeks funding to address the suicide crisis in Massachusetts jails and prisons. Between 2000 and 2019, there were 61 prisoner suicides in Massachusetts state prisons and 80 in Massachusetts jails. This funding would be used to conduct a review of each Department of Correction (DOC) carceral facility, each county house of correction, and each county jail, including an environmental survey.

Children and Youth

\$300K to develop recommendations for mental health education goals and objectives by grade level for Massachusetts public schools (DMH 5042-5000: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

MAMH requests funding to curate and/or develop mental health curricula and resources for K-12 students, using the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework as a guide. The process would involve staffing and compensating an advisory group, retaining experts, and conducting investigation into existing practices. The goal is to make mental health education resources more readily available to schools across the Commonwealth.

\$10M, a \$5.772M increase in funding over FY23 GAA, for Student Behavioral Health Services at State Universities and Community and Municipally Owned Colleges (DHE 7066-1123)

MAMH requests increased funding to address the mental health needs of students at Massachusetts universities and colleges. This funding may support crisis services, therapy, assessment of learning disorders, responses to sexual assault, substance use condition services, and assistance to students struggling with stress, anxiety, or other mental health needs.

Older Adults

\$3.5M, a \$1M increase in funding over FY23 GAA, for Elder Mental Health Outreach Teams (EMHOTs) (EOEA 9110-1640: Geriatric Mental Health Services)

MAMH requests increased funding for Elder Mental Health Outreach Teams (EMHOTs). EMHOTs bring vital community based behavioral health supports to older adults in their own homes and reduce reliance on EDs and expensive congregate care settings such as nursing homes. Currently, demand exceeds supply, but providers are available to provide additional services if funding becomes available. The goal is to make EMHOTs available in all communities statewide.

Refugees and Immigrants

\$300K increase for the Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) for the Refugees Health Promotion Program (ORI 4003-0111: Administration and Operations)

MAMH requests an increase in funding for the state Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) so that ORIs may provide additional behavioral health services for refugees, particularly those with histories of trauma. This funding would provide additional resources to ORI's contracted community-based organizations for their staff to participate in trainings and provide additional behavioral health programming to their refugee communities.

Substance Use Services

\$3M for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS) for technical assistance and training to providers on how to treat individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions (DPH 4512-0200)

MAMH requests funding so that the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) can offer technical assistance and training to providers on how to treat individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions.

For more information, contact **Jennifer Honig and Jessica Larochelle**, MAMH Co-Directors of Public Policy and Government Relations: jenniferhonig@mamh.org and jessicalarochelle@mamh.org