



FY24 State Budget - Conference Committee *Behavioral Health Priorities*

The following FY24 budget provisions address the behavioral health needs of people across the Commonwealth. We appreciate the Conference Committee considering these recommendations and we hope that the Committee adopts them in the version of the budget that will be sent to the Governor's Desk.

Provisions included in the House (H.3901) FY24 budget bill:

- **\$8.39M, a \$2M increase in funding for the Home and Healthy for Good Permanent Supportive Housing Program (DHCD 7004-0104)**
To expand this program that places persons experiencing chronic or long-term homelessness into low-threshold, permanent housing with supportive services. The program's flexible funding can be used to leverage local, state, and federal resources.
- **\$11M, a \$2M increase over the base budget funding in FY23, for the Massachusetts Jail/Arrest Diversion Initiative (DMH 5046-0000 Adult Mental Health and Support Services)**
To provide grants to local communities and behavioral health providers to improve outcomes for individuals when they encounter police and other first responders during a behavioral health crisis. In FY20, DMH expended \$3,915,661 on 61 grants to cities and towns across the state ranging from \$7,500 to \$298,000. With an additional \$2M, DMH could increase funding to current grantees that wish to expand diversion services or award funds to new grantees committing to the diversion of people with behavioral health conditions.

Provisions included in the Senate (S.2400) FY24 budget bill:

- **\$19M for the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Adult Emergency Room (ER) Diversion Initiative (DMH 5046-0000)**
To create or expand respite programs that will support individuals in transitioning out of ERs and back into the community, as well as divert individuals from ERs and unnecessary hospitalization in the first place.
- **\$4M increase for the DMH Rental Subsidy Program (DHCD 7004-9033)**
To address the increased need for rental assistance among individuals with severe and disabling mental health conditions, as evident by the significant number of people "stuck" in hospitals, ERs, and nursing homes. Rental assistance allows individuals to thrive in community with tenancy and clinical services, and it provides critical support to helping people engage in treatment and achieve recovery.
- **\$3M increase for the Safe Haven Program (DMH 5046-2000)**
To establish six new Safe Havens across the state. Safe Haven programs provide transitional and supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals with multiple disabilities who are not well served by the traditional shelter system, usually due to histories of trauma.

- **\$1.275M for a statewide School-Based Behavioral Health Technical Assistance Center (DMH 5042-5000)**
 To support the statewide launch of the school-based behavioral health technical assistance center, which assists school districts and partnering community providers to build and sustain capacity to meet the social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of K-12 students. Currently, the center is primarily providing technical assistance in Western Mass. This request also includes \$75,000 for MAMH to conduct an environmental scan of K-12 mental health education initiatives and to align the identified curricular resources with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework.
- **\$1.25M for the Middlesex County Restoration Center (EOHHS 4000-0300)**
 To pilot a center that will expand community capacity for mental health and substance use treatment and support ongoing law enforcement diversionary efforts across New England’s most populous county.
- **\$300K for the Refugee Health Promotion Program to expand mental health and wellness programming (ORI 4003-0122)**
 To provide additional resources to community-based organizations contracted with the Office of Refugees and Immigrants to provide additional behavioral health programming to their refugee communities.
- **\$250K for the Division of Insurance (DOI) to implement the parity requirements in the new mental health omnibus law, Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022 (DOI 7006-0029)**
 To enable the DOI to expand the capacity of its Health Care Access Bureau to enforce the parity provisions in Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022 by hiring staff, investigating, and adjudicating consumer and provider parity complaints, and conducting market conduct exams and other activities.
- **\$192M in appropriations for the Behavioral Health Trust Fund (4000-0054)**
 To appropriate federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, 42 U.S.C. 802(c) (“ARPA”) dollars for the purpose of “addressing barriers to the delivery of an equitable, culturally-competent, affordable and clinically-appropriate continuum of behavioral health care and services.” These appropriations are consistent with the [recommendations](#) put forth by the Behavioral Health Advisory Commission.

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