



Behavioral Health System Baltimore

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Baltimore mental health and substance abuse nonprofits officially merge under new name — Behavioral Health System Baltimore

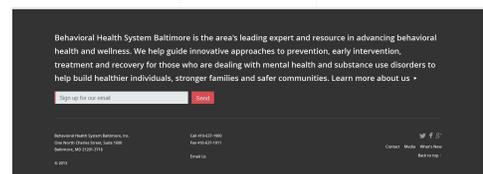
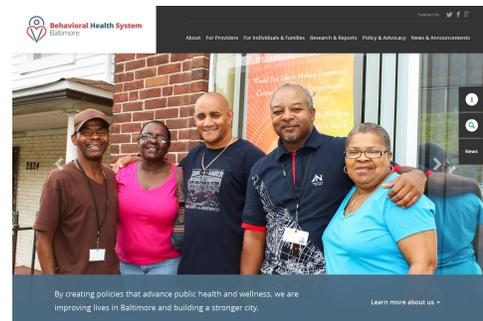
*Organization to provide leadership in advancing innovative approaches
to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery*

BALTIMORE — [Behavioral Health System Baltimore](http://www.BHSBaltimore.org) — the newly formed organization created by the merger of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems (bSAS) and Baltimore Mental Health Systems (BMHS) — officially launches today to provide citywide leadership in developing innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery to help build healthier individuals, stronger families and safer communities.

Also today, BHS Baltimore launches its new website — www.BHSBaltimore.org — which provides a wealth of information and resources about mental health and substance abuse treatment in and around the city. The website also will provide timely updates as Maryland moves to fully implement the federal Affordable Care Act in the coming months, and thousands of uninsured Marylanders gain access to insurance and seek out treatment options.

Check us out on Facebook at [BHSBaltimore](https://www.facebook.com/BHSBaltimore) and Twitter [@BHSBaltimore](https://twitter.com/BHSBaltimore) for daily updates and topics of interest.

BHS Baltimore, with 70 employees and an estimated \$68.5 million annual operating budget, will be a leader in improving the behavioral health system in Baltimore and ensuring that individuals and families get the help they need to address both mental health and substance abuse issues.



The organization will advocate for and help guide the development of a more efficient and responsive system that comprehensively addresses mental illness and substance abuse, said Bernard J. McBride, BHS Baltimore's recently named chief executive officer.

"We are committed to making it easier in Baltimore to get high-quality mental and substance abuse treatment and support," said McBride, who most recently was director of Bucks County Behavioral Health System in Pennsylvania. "We envision a system that enables providers to more effectively and efficiently collaborate to help individuals and their families achieve the best possible outcomes for their health and wellness."

McBride said the organization will advance its objectives in these ways:

- ⌚ Working to influence policy development through advocacy at the state level.
- ⌚ Raising public health awareness through education and outreach efforts centered on behavioral health issues.
- ⌚ Allocating resources for substance use and mental health services to Baltimore service providers.

The merger of Baltimore's mental health and substance abuse organizations comes as many other similar agencies across the country are likewise integrating their work on mental illness and substance use disorders to better meet patients' needs.

"Merging these two organizations will be a game changer for Baltimore City," Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake said. "As health reform implementation takes shape, it's critical for all components of our health care delivery system to be well-positioned to provide the best access to the highest quality care."

Behavioral Health System Baltimore will work closely with the Baltimore City Health Department to strengthen the city's network of behavioral health services. Baltimore City Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot will be chair of the new organization's board of directors.

"This new organization will help our local providers leverage resources and coordinate services," Dr. Barbot said. "It will be an avid champion for treating mental illness and substance use disorders in a more holistic way and helping us achieve better outcomes for individuals and families."

About Behavioral Health System Baltimore

Behavioral Health System Baltimore is a nonprofit organization that provides leadership in advancing behavioral health and wellness. BHS Baltimore guides and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery to help build healthier individuals, stronger families and safer communities. The organization's goal is to help build an efficient and responsive system that comprehensively addresses mental health and substance use disorders.

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