



January 11, 2017

The Honorable Governor Lawrence Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) located in Baltimore, Maryland, I am writing to **urge and request your support in protecting Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)**, thus preserving health insurance coverage of more than 476,000 Marylanders, particularly those living with mental illness or substance use disorders.

BHSB is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City and works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health services and advocate for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery to help build healthier individuals, stronger families and safer communities. **Baltimore City represents almost 40 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 65,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders annually.**

Recently, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and leaders of health-related committees in the House of Representatives sent a letter to Governors seeking input into changes related to the marketplaces, Medicaid, and private insurance. BHSB urges you to support maintaining the current Medicaid expansion and the Medicaid program and to work with other Governors to do so.

Under a repeal, Maryland would lose nearly \$28 billion in federal funding and pay more in uncompensated care costs. In 2016 in Baltimore City, 56,000 people utilized mental health services through Maryland Medicaid – this is up from 49,000 people in 2014. The increase in access to care, in conjunction with the success made to advance your Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force plan, has helped to ensure access to high-quality behavioral health treatment and services in Maryland. A repeal would severely hinder this progress. These financial investments throughout Maryland and through programs like Medicaid are integral components in the fight to end the opioid overdose epidemic and support behavioral health and wellness.

It is the position of BHSB that Maryland continue to support the Medicaid program and its expansion in the year ahead. We look forward to working with you to ensure that all Maryland residents are able to receive lifesaving mental health and addiction services. Should you or your office have questions, please feel free to contact Adrienne Breidenstine, Vice President, Policy and Communications, at Adrienne.Breidenstine@bhsbaltimore.org or 443-615-7824.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter and for your commitment to addressing the behavioral health and wellness in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Westcoat". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Westcoat
President and CEO

CC: Sam Malhotra, Chief of Staff
Chris Shank, Chief Legislative Officer
Dennis Schrader, Secretary, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene