



County of Bucks

Office of the Commissioners

Bucks County Administration Building
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County Commissioners

ROBERT J. HARVIE, JR., *Chair*

DIANE M. ELLIS-MARSEGLIA, LCSW, *Vice Chairman*

GENE DIGIROLAMO, *Security*

MARGARET A. MCKEVITT
Chief Operating Officer

Dear Bucks County Legislative Delegation,

All three Bucks County Commissioners are jointly and formally requesting that the Bucks County Legislative Delegation support increased, sustainable funding for community-based mental health services to address the growing mental health crisis in Pennsylvania. On May 4, 2022, we passed a bipartisan resolution (attached) in support of appropriate funding for the mental health system.

As you know, counties are the providers and front line of community-based mental health services, and are seeing ever-increasing demand for mental health services that far exceed state funding levels. Without adequate and sustainable funding, county governments like ours will not be able to meet the critical mental health needs of our most vulnerable Pennsylvanians.

In the 2012 budget, \$84 million was cut from human services funding. Since then, our commonwealth's counties and human services providers have struggled to maintain staffing and provide adequate services. Of course, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the problem has gotten exponentially worse. We've seen a dramatic increase in suicide, substance abuse issues, and a surge for treatment for anxiety and depression.

In 2022, members of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, comprised of all 67 counties in this commonwealth, have made appropriate funding to support the mental health system our top priority. Based on our experiences in Bucks County alone, we implore you to vote to increase mental health services funding, so we can fulfill our obligation to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

The current funding appropriation is not sufficient. In Bucks County, we are managing through this with a mere 30% of the financial power we had 14 years ago in 2008. This funding is how we pay for crisis services including, but not limited to, emergency room care for those without commercial insurance. An increase in funding for community-based mental health is imperative. It will be an investment in our mental health system, which will pay dividends for our commonwealth for generations to come.

Without greater support from the General Assembly and Governor's administration moving forward, it will continue to be impossible to properly address depression, anxiety, autism, just to name a few. We look forward to working in partnership with you and our colleagues across the state to better serve the residents of Bucks County and all Pennsylvanians.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. It is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact us via our Chief Clerk & Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Gail Humphrey, by phone at (215) 348-6004 or via email at ghumphrey@buckscounty.org.

Sincerely,

The Bucks County Board of Commissioners



Robert J. Harvie Jr.
Chair



Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW
Vice Chair



Gene DiGirolamo
Secretary