

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY OF BUCKS
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR THE MENTAL
HEALTH SYSTEM IN PENNSYLVANIA**

WHEREAS, the Bucks County Board of Commissioners is committed to supporting the County's ability to provide essential community-based mental health services such as crisis intervention, community residential programs, community training initiatives, family-based support and outpatient care, which are critical to the well-being of its constituents and our communities; and

WHEREAS, as the providers of community-based mental health services are seeing demands for mental health services in the community that far exceed state funding levels; and

WHEREAS, without adequate and sustainable funding, Bucks County may not be able to meet the mental health needs of some of our most vulnerable residents; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 the Commonwealth cut \$84 million to the Mental Health Base Funds that Bucks County uses to fund programs for people with intellectual disabilities, mental health challenges, and other needs which forced programs to close and put the human services system into a vulnerable state; and

WHEREAS, these 2012 cuts, coupled with a lack of Cost-of-Living Adjustment to Mental Health Base funding over the last 14 years, have led to stark consequences for our mental health system including the closing of programs, staff reductions, reduction in the numbers of qualified staff, and reductions in the continuum of support that individuals need to stay healthy and thrive in our community; and

WHEREAS, ensuring there is an increase in Mental Health Base Funds in the FY 2022-2023 state budget is critical so that Bucks County can provide individuals without health insurance or whose insurance does not cover needed services the ability to access mental health services; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) made mental health system funding the top priority of the association's advocacy in 2022; and

WHEREAS, state funding has lagged far behind needs and caseloads for years, which has negatively affected services while also putting tension on communities and local budgets; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's initial budget proposal included supporting the behavioral health needs of Pennsylvanians by investing \$36.6 million additional funds in county Mental Health Base Funds on top of \$75 million in federal funds for recruitment and retention payments to qualifying home and community-based service providers, as well as \$18.8 million to provide services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or autism currently on the emergency waitlist; and

WHEREAS, Bucks County has invested in community-based mental health services that meet the

needs and challenges of our community including prevention services such as the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) program, crisis intervention training programs for law enforcement officers, crisis services including residential, site-based and mobile crisis, respite services, and supportive housing; and

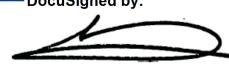
WHEREAS, Bucks County's programs supported by the Mental Health Base Funding have shown real and tangible positive results such as providing over 600 law enforcement professionals with crisis intervention training, provided close to 300 Bucks County residents at any one time with Departmental Mental Health Base Funding for supportive housing; and whose prevention efforts supported by Mental Health Base Funds have resulted in a decrease in suicide rates in Bucks County when national trends have shown an upward trend; and

WHEREAS, with increased Mental Health Base Funding, Bucks County would be able to strengthen our mental health system by ensuring sustained rate increases to service providers and provide better wages to staff serving our most vulnerable populations, provide increased training and education in schools through evidence-based curriculums to support mental health resiliency, and develop a Crisis Response and Stabilization Center that would help to alleviate the stresses on our Emergency Rooms which have only increased during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, counties will need collaboration between the legislature and administration to work closely with them on a targeted, strategic investment of dollars into community mental health services at the county level in order to continue the existing safety net and bolster the availability of mental health services to those who need them as vital steps in the right direction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Bucks does hereby support an increase in funding for community Mental Health Base programs in accordance with the priorities of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania by the General Assembly and Administration.

ATTEST:

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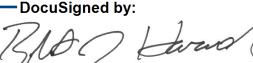
Gail Humphrey
Chief Clerk

DATE:

5/4/2022



BY:

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Robert J. Harvie, Jr.
Commissioner, Chair

BY:

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Diane M. Ellis-Marsiglia, LCSW
Commissioner, Vice Chair

BY:

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Gene DiGirolamo
Commissioner, Secretary