

Position Statement

2021

Mental Health Support

Proposal

Issue:

The COVID-19 virus has and continues to produce unique challenges for all individuals and communities in Minnesota. The uniqueness of this pandemic puts added stress on many, especially with those living with mental illness. With social distancing, isolation and loneliness becomes a major concern. They nourish despair and discouragement ending up in one of several types of depressive disorders and potentially self-destructive acts; it can aggravate fears and precipitate one or several types of anxiety disorders.

Grief and loss, financial stressors, and isolation have resulted in increased levels of anxiety, depression and substance use among many Minnesotans. Counties, as the mental health authority in each community, are tasked with the safety and care of our families and individuals. As mental health concerns continue to grow, additional resources will be imperative to ensure quality mental health care.

The Governors proposed 2022-23 Budget seeks to significantly decrease AMHI grants as well as CSP grants that were designed to allow communities the flexibility to provide mental health services that meet the needs of the individuals in the community. This is the time to provide support to the people who are suffering during the pandemic; not remove access to the needed services at this critical time.

Implementation Strategy:

MACSSA supports an increase to AMHI regional block grants of either of \$1.00 per person or 20% of current grant allocation, whichever is higher. MACSSA opposes any decrease in funding to either the AMHI or CSP grants. This will allow flexibility to counties to use these in areas of need specific to their communities.

Systemic Priority Alignment (check all that apply and explain why)

Equity Service Integration Fiscal Framework

Comments:

Operational Priority Alignment (check all that apply and explain why)

Behavioral Health Case Management Child Well Being Community Based Settings & Services
 Health Care Housing & Transportation Modernization Self Sufficiency

Comments:

Rationale/Background:

245.465 outlines the duties of the county board. This includes Subdivision 1. Use of mental health funds.

The county board in each county shall use its share of mental health funds allocated by the commissioner according to the mental health plan approved by the commissioner. The county board must:

- (1) develop and coordinate a system of affordable and locally available adult mental health services in accordance with sections [245.461](#) to [245.486](#);

Adult Mental Health Initiatives (AMHI) are regional organizations that oversee adult mental health services and funding to counties and tribal governments in their area. The AMHIs serve as a mechanism for regional collaboration to build effective community-based mental health services across Minnesota.

As these AMHI groups are overseeing the adult mental health services, they have historically (in the past 25 years) received no increases and have actually suffered significant decreases to these block grants. Often the dollars are accounted for to maintain essential services for individuals living with serious and persistent mental illness. To adequately be able to respond to the rising mental health concerns and crises, counties will need additional resources to support local providers. The models of service delivery may shift as the virus continues to spread in our communities. There will be a cost to improving infrastructure, increasing staffing where necessary, and cover unforeseen costs in service delivery.

Additional Information:



Submitted by: