



Response to Senate Finance Committee Request for Information on Behavioral Health Priorities

Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission

Joanne Jee

October 29, 2021

www.macpac.gov

 [@macpacgov](https://twitter.com/macpacgov)

Overview

- Senate Finance Committee request for information (RFI)
- Review MACPAC draft response letter
- Next steps

Request for Information

- Senate Finance Committee RFI seeks input on approaches to enhance behavioral health care:
 - Strengthening the workforce;
 - Increasing integration, coordination, and access to care;
 - Ensuring parity between behavioral and physical health
 - Furthering the use of telehealth; and
 - Improving access to behavioral health for children and young people
- Responses are due November 1

MACPAC Response

- Summarizes MACPAC's body of work and recommendations
- Stresses the need to address access to behavioral health services in Medicaid and CHIP, including barriers that result in disparities in access to care and outcomes

MACPAC Response: Strengthening the Workforce

- Provider shortage and maldistribution
 - Shortage projections
 - Limits on Medicaid's ability to address the issues
- Provider acceptance of Medicaid
 - Mental health providers are less likely to accept Medicaid than other insurance
 - May reflect low payment rates, credentialing requirements, or inadequate information technology systems

MACPAC Response: Integration, Coordination, and Access

- Integrating clinical care
 - Use of electronic health record (EHR)/certified EHR technology and barriers to adoption
- Alignment of federal privacy rules
 - 42 CFR Part 2 versus HIPAA
 - Regulations implementing recent legislative changes are pending
- Access to care
 - Institutions for mental diseases (IMD), crisis services, SUD and opioid treatment program services, coverage and services for adults in the criminal justice system

MACPAC Response: Mental Health Parity

- Federal parity law does not appear to have substantially improved access to behavioral health care for Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries
- Focuses on discrete barriers that may limit access, does not require coverage of behavioral health services, and can be difficult to operationalize

MACPAC Response: Expanding Telehealth

- Rapid expansion of telehealth, including for behavioral health services, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Pandemic flexibilities for prescribing buprenorphine for opioid use disorder
- Access to broadband and technology considerations
- Need for data and ongoing information sharing

MACPAC Response: Access for Children and Young People

- Home- and community-based services for children in Medicaid and CHIP with behavioral health needs
- Needs of children and youth in the juvenile justice system
- Needs of children and youth in the child welfare system
- MACPAC recommendations:
 - Guidance on the design and implementation of benefits for children and youth with significant mental health needs
 - Education and technical assistance to states in improving access to home- and community-based behavioral health services

Next Steps

- Edit and revise letter based on commissioner feedback
- Submit response to the Senate Finance Committee by November 1
- Post response on the MACPAC website



Response to Senate Finance Committee Request for Information on Behavioral Health Priorities

Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission

Joanne Jee

October 29, 2021

