



## **Diverse Faces, Many Lives: New Jerseyans Deserve a Community-based Behavioral Health System that Will Allow Them to Thrive!**

Now, more than ever, New Jersey must invest in a strong, sustainable community-based system of care to meet the needs of New Jersey's diverse children, youth and adults. Inadequate rates have crippled many programs since the transition to a fee-for-service reimbursement system in 2017 and made it nearly impossible for providers to be competitive in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Investment is needed to sustain quality care for the many diverse lives who stand to benefit and to then expand capacity to increase access to care for all New Jerseyans. Toward those ends, NJAMHAA calls on the Legislature and Administration to support the following:

### **Budget Priorities**

- Close the deficit gap caused by the transition to fee-for-service reimbursement with a \$25 million investment (until such time that rates are adjusted to cover the actual costs of care).
- Appropriate funds to cover recent and future increases to the minimum wage (until such time that rates are adjusted to cover the actual costs of care).
- Invest \$1.1 million in existing Early Intervention Support Services programs.
- Invest \$5 million in existing School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) that have had no contract increases in 10 to 20 years.

### **Other Budget Recommendations**

- Appropriate \$1.5 million to support the Screening Center early intervention grant program.
- Appropriate \$10 million as an initial investment into facility resources for behavioral health providers to further develop integrated care.
- Appropriate \$10 million for mental health providers to upgrade, implement and maintain interoperable EHRs.

### **Policy Priorities**

- Pass A5836 to establish a formula for automatic upward rate and contract adjustments that is indexed to actual costs.
- Allow Psychiatric Advance Practice Nurses to fill the role of Psychiatrists on Programs for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) Teams.
- Pass S138 and A1444 (with amendment) to reinstate the 70+ year exemption of vehicle registration fees for nonprofit organizations' vehicles that was reversed in 2017.

### **Other Policy Recommendations**

- Establish an ombudsman position in the Department of Banking and Insurance that would be dedicated to behavioral health services.