



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

**Behavioral Health Administration**

Aliya Jones, M.D. MBA, Deputy Secretary  
Behavioral Health  
55 Wade Avenue, SGHC/Voc. Rehab Building  
Catonsville, MD 21228

April 4, 2022

Dear BH Partners:

April is both **Alcohol Awareness Month** and **Autism Awareness Month**. In addition, **National Public Health Week kicked off on April 4<sup>th</sup>** and **World Health Day is celebrated on April 7<sup>th</sup>**. Each of these occasions call us to engage in conversations on prevention and intervention efforts to help individuals recognize, understand, and seek treatment for various and important healthcare issues.

Thank you, to those of you who are hosting or participating in awareness events. I would also like to remind you that this month can serve as a personal call to take care of ourselves. I encourage you to continue to implement or initiate healing and supportive methods or techniques that can improve and preserve your own wellness.

As we continue to move into the warmer months of spring and summer, many of us will begin to have more in-person socialization with families and friends through various family and community events, and work and school activities. This reconnection can have positive effects on our health, bringing hope that happier norms are returning. While cases of COVID are stably low and vaccinations and boosters are continuing to be effective, we should continue to practice all health and safety guidelines. If we remain proactive in maintaining wellness and encourage our patients and communities to do the same, we can safely enjoy all the joys that gathering with family and friends can bring both now and in the foreseeable future.

Your ongoing strength, vigilance, and commitment to the important work we do together in building y wellness has enabled us to be responsive to meeting community needs, particularly over the last few years with the challenges of COVID, social unrest, the opioid crisis, and other issues. I am confident that as we further redefine and enhance our service system, we will continue to improve outcomes. BHA is committed to our partnership of public service to improving the lives of all Marylanders through effective and efficient quality healthcare.

As previously announced, I am leaving MDH in May. I am pleased to inform you that Lisa A. Burgess, M.D. Medicaid’s Chief Medical Officer, will be returning as the Acting Deputy Secretary, with full duties to begin on April 16. She is an effective leader and clinician. I am confident that through her leadership, Maryland’s Behavioral Health System will continue to advance as a quality system of care that is more equitable, efficient, and effective.

As I close, I would like to say a final “thank you” for your support to me personally during my tenure as the Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health. It has truly been an honor to serve in this capacity and work with you. I have been inspired by your compassion, strength, flexibility, and creativity towards addressing the needs of our communities and improving outcomes through more data-driven system enhancements. I wish you continued success in these efforts and hope that the future grants each of you much peace, happiness, and good health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aliya Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "J".

Aliya Jones, M.D., MBA  
Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health