



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

March 8, 2021

Dear Providers,

Working in health care already involves a unique set of stressors, and the COVID-19 pandemic exponentially added to these. We want to share some of what the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) is doing that can support you during these stressful times.

Operation Courage is a BHA initiative to provide mental health support to Maryland's workforce, including essential frontline workers, first responders, and health care workers. Learn more at www.theoperationcourage.com. It starts with a free online assessment followed by a free consultation, and those who decide to engage are offered up to six weeks of therapy. Insurance is accepted, copays are waived when possible, and discounted rates are available if uninsured.

Through a partnership with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), the **Maryland COVID-19 Mental Health Crisis Support Program** offers free, confidential mental health support for people working in skilled nursing and other long-term care facilities impacted by COVID-19. [Request mental health services](#) for yourself or your organization or [learn more](#) about the program. For questions, email miemss.crisisresponse@maryland.gov. For urgent requests, call 1-800-648-3001.

Through [Maryland's Helpline — call 211, and press 1](#) — you can opt in to receive texts to stay connected with caring messages of hope and encouragement for your mental wellness, from the BHA sponsored text-messaging platforms **MDMindHealth** and **MDSaludMental** described [here](#). For regular messages text MDMindHealth to 898-211 or text MDSaludMental a 898-211. The crisis helpline is also a resource for accessing routine mental health and substance use services. For help, you can also visit pressone.211md.org or [chat confidentially](#) about local services and programs.

The **BHA/MedChi Behavioral Health Webinar Series: Helping the Helpers and Those They Serve** is for Maryland's health care workers of all disciplines, whether working in community or hospital settings. They are designed to enhance both health care worker self-care and resultantly the care they provide, as health care workers combat numerous stressors including the COVID-19 pandemic, social justice issues, and other stressors that can potentially impact delivered care. CMEs are available at no cost, as are Participant Certificates, which for other disciplines may potentially qualify for CEUs or other continuing education credit. It is at 5 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Here is information on the March webinars, which can be found along with archived presentations [on our website](#).

- March 11: **Self-Compassion and Self-Care as Buffers Against the Stress of the Pandemic**
Monica Neel, PsyD. Moderator: Hinda Dubin, MD. [/Register for this webinar](#).
- March 25: **The Stigma for Health Care Workers Seeking Behavioral Health Care**
Crystal Greene, DNP and Megan Buresh, MD. Moderator: Consuelo Green, CPRS [/Register for this webinar](#).

We hope that you take advantage of at least one of these support resources and share them with others. Thank you for the care that you have provided to the community, don't forget to take care of yourself.

Sincerely,

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