



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

Behavioral Health Administration

Lisa A. Burgess, M.D., Acting
Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health
55 Wade Avenue, SGHC/Voc. Rehab
Building Catonsville, MD 21228

May 10, 2022

Dear Behavioral Health Partners:

I am honored to bring you this month's monthly message and behavioral health updates. As the newly appointed Acting Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health, I will continue to support you in bringing lifelong health and wellness for all Marylanders.

As some of you may recall, I served in this role in 2019, and I'm excited to support this important work in this capacity again. I am board-certified in general psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry, as well as health care quality and management by the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians. I have served the state of Maryland since 2012, first working in the Medicaid Pharmacy Program until 2016 at which time I moved into my current role as the Chief Medical Officer.

I will remain in my role as the Chief Medical Officer, but this will not diminish my commitment to you and the behavioral health community as the Acting Deputy Secretary. I assure you my commitment remains at the highest level in addressing the behavioral health needs of Maryland's families. I look forward to continuing the work to build a more robust, comprehensive, responsive, and effective system of care to help individuals and their families regain wellness.

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and this year's theme is Together in Mental Health. Together, we can build resilience in wellness and this month affords us a wonderful opportunity to build greater awareness on mental health issues to help diminish the stigma surrounding mental illness and encourage individuals to seek treatment and help connect them to services and supports. It can also serve as a reminder to encourage a self-check on our own mental health.

Over the last two years, we have been challenged on all fronts — emotionally, physically, and financially. It is, therefore, important to remember to take care of ourselves and focus on our mental wellness, which in turn will enable us to take care of others. You may want to re-review the [mental wellness information and resources](#) on our website and share this information with your patients and loved ones.

Monthly Message to BH
Partners May 10, 2022

This month's **National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week**, held the first week of May, provided a platform for many jurisdictions to emphasize greater awareness on children's mental health and resources available to help families. It also was an opportunity to highlight the Children's Mental Health Matters Campaign, a 20+ year partnership between Maryland Coalition of Families, Mental Health Association of Maryland, and BHA. For more information on this campaign, I encourage you to visit childrensmentalhealthmatters.org. BHA's Children, Adolescent and Transitional Youth Division continues to work closely with our jurisdictions and other behavioral health partners to expand and improve behavioral health services and supports to help families access services when needed.

May is also **Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**. Let us celebrate together in mental health and embrace all our cultural differences which enrich our lives and make our world more beautiful and much more interesting. Building a more equitable system of care, we stand united in celebrating cultural diversity and honor our Asian and Pacific Islander Americans and their contributions past and present.

I look forward to our working together on furthering system's enhancements and supporting you in the important work you do in improving the lives of individuals with behavioral health disorders and their families. I am committed to transparency and will continue to keep communications flowing to keep you informed, safe and productive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa A. Burges, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa A. Burges, M.D.
Acting Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health