



Behavioral Health Advocacy Priorities

The Michigan Federation for Children and Families is a statewide association of community-based organizations devoted to protecting children, building families, and strengthening communities. Behavioral health services are offered by Michigan Federation member agencies throughout the state who focus on the access to and delivery of behavioral and mental health services, along with community partnerships to achieve the strongest outcomes for kids and families. The Michigan Federation has identified the following **key priorities to improve the behavioral health system to meet the needs of children and families in Michigan:**

- 1. Support for expansion of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model.** The CCBHC model is a validated approach to integrated care that improves access and service outcomes while controlling costs—factors that have long been a part of the systems reform conversation in Michigan. Continued support for the CCBHC model, including a plan to expand the existing demonstration pilot sites, should be formally incorporated into Michigan’s behavioral health service delivery system through statute and the appropriations process. The model should remain open to private nonprofit organizations as key partners and subcontractors to serving children and families within Michigan. In addition, allowing the model to be implemented with flexibility will allow for collaboration amongst local providers to leverage comprehensive community services.
- 2. Improve access to services.** Equitable access to behavioral health services is critical to serving children and families in Michigan. Telehealth has proven to be an effective and cost-efficient method of delivery for some behavioral health services, allowing flexibility to consumers needing treatment. Parity with in-person services, including the option for audio-only telehealth would ensure individuals in areas with inadequate internet services continue to have access. In addition, improving the flexibility of licensing requirements of providers will impact the current workforce shortage, which impacts the ability of individuals to access the care they need. This includes flexibility in the time professionals have to take the licensure exam and the scope of practice.
- 3. Fully fund the cost of providing care.** Current provider rates are insufficient to fully fund the cost of providing behavioral health services. Actuarially sound rates are needed to ensure the rates reflect the demand and cost of providing services. Providers of these community-based services advocate for the legislature to appropriate the funds in accordance with the results of the Milliman actuarial analysis, ensuring the dollars are allocated to provider organizations through the local CMH or PIHP entities.
- 4. Address administrative burden issues.** Administrative burden and redundancies are impacting workload strain and workforce retention across the state. The paperwork demands within Michigan’s public behavioral health system are far greater compared to those working in private practice or schools. Reducing these burdens would allow for practitioners to spend more time engaging with and supporting individuals, improve access, and improve workforce recruitment and retention.