



Behavioral Health

NEWS UPDATE

June 2022

SPOTLIGHT

NEW RESOURCES

AHA issues a new report examining impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on behavioral health

The AHA released a [report](#) describing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on behavioral health in the U.S. Among other topics, the report looks at in-person utilization during the pandemic; the increased need for behavioral health services; the effects on specific populations, including the health care workforce, youth, LGBTQ+ and historically underrepresented groups; and innovative ways of providing behavioral health services. In addition, the report highlights legislative and regulatory actions taken during the pandemic, as well as AHA policy recommendations for future actions.

New Child & Adolescent and Maternal Mental Health Resource Pages

To better support hospitals and health systems in addressing [child and adolescent mental health](#) and [maternal mental health](#), the AHA now offers dedicated webpages to provide information, resources and best practices. View latest resources such as [Blog: Making Maternal Mental Health a Priority](#) and [Infographic: Five Keys to a Successful Maternal Mental Health Program](#), as well as [Podcast: Transforming Pediatric Mental Health: Partnerships and Integration at Rady Children's Hospital](#) and [Blog: Hope lives at Shodair Children's Hospital](#). If you have a story to tell, or resources to share on either one of these critical issue areas, email behavioralhealth@aha.org.

ADVOCACY | AHA, others urge appeals court to rehear landmark behavioral health coverage case

The AHA and other hospital and health care organizations [urged](#) the full U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit to rehear *Wit v. United Behavioral Health*, a case that former congressman and mental health advocate Patrick Kennedy has described as the “*Brown v. Board of Education* for the mental health community.” [LEARN MORE](#)

ADVOCACY | Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-being Act

The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee [voted unanimously](#) to advance to the full committee the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-being Act (H.R. 7666), bipartisan legislation that would reauthorize over 30 programs set to expire in September that support mental health care, prevention, education and workforce training. The bill includes AHA-supported legislation that would reauthorize and expand a program that addresses maternal depression to include mental health and substance use disorders, and require the Health and Human Services Secretary to maintain a national hotline to provide mental health and substance use disorder resources to pregnant and postpartum women and their families.

ADVOCACY | AHA calls for increased CMS oversight, DOJ action to hold Medicare Advantage plans accountable

The AHA urged the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to “take swift action to hold Medicare Advantage plans accountable for inappropriately and illegally restricting beneficiary access to medically necessary care,” citing in part a recent [report](#) from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Inspector General that found an estimated 13% of prior authorization denials and 18% of payment denials met coverage requirements and were thus inappropriate.

In a [separate letter](#), AHA urged the Justice Department to establish a task force to conduct False Claims Act investigations into commercial health insurance companies that are found to routinely deny patients access to services and deny payments to health care providers.

ADVOCACY | Biden-Harris administration highlights strategy to address the national mental health crisis

The Biden-Harris administration is taking new actions to advance the President’s mental health strategy across its three objectives: strengthening system capacity, connecting more Americans to care and creating a continuum of support. [LEARN MORE](#)

CHAIR FILE | Making behavioral health a priority in health care

In a May 23 [chair file](#), AHA Board Chair Wright L. Lassiter III shared that behavioral health is one of the key priorities that crosscuts the five pillars in AHA's 2022–2024 strategic plan. In addition, he noted that AHA continues to advocate for behavioral health priorities with Congress and the Administration. Finally he highlighted the work AHA is doing to advance behavioral health care during [May](#), which was Mental Health Awareness Month. For additional resources, [CLICK HERE](#).

AHA PERSPECTIVE | Rick Pollack, AHA CEO: Taking Action to Stop Gun Violence

Every day, hospitals and health systems across the country respond to the trauma caused by gun violence. Through the AHA's Hospitals Against Violence initiative, [we have](#) partnered with the National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center to provide resources and support surrounding incidents of mass violence for the communities and patients served by hospitals and health systems. Just seven days after this Perspective was shared, a gunman killed at least four people, along with himself, in a shooting on the campus of Saint Francis Hospital in Tulsa, Okla., police said. On June 2, Rick Pollack, AHA's president and CEO, issued the following [statement](#) in response.



CONFERENCE

2022 AHA Leadership Summit

JULY 17-19 | SAN DIEGO

The [2022 AHA Leadership Summit](#), July 17–19, features educational programming for behavioral health leaders including: *Pursuing Value with Provider-Partnered Health Plans*; *Creating a Resilient Nursing Workforce Model with Flexible Staffing*; *Not My Patient? Combating Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Stigma by Changing Hospital Culture*; and *The Kids Are Not OK: Meeting Community Behavioral Health Needs Through Partnership*.



NEWS | 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline accepting volunteer, employee applications

The [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#), a free and confidential phone, text and chat line available via the 3-digit dialing code beginning July 16 for anyone experiencing a suicidal or mental health-related crisis, seeks caring volunteers and employees to serve as crisis counselors. All employees and volunteers receive training. [Apply here](#).

The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) will transition to the new three-digit service, authorized by the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020.

NEWS | HRSA offers maternal mental health hotline

The Health Resources and Services Administration launched on May 8 a [toll-free hotline](#) for expecting and new mothers experiencing mental health challenges. Trained counselors provide brief interventions and referrals to community-based and telehealth providers as needed. Callers also receive evidence-based information and referrals to support groups and other community resources.



DIGITAL TOOLKIT | AHA releases #HAVhope digital toolkit to support June 3 Hospitals Against Violence campaign

AHA on June 3 will hold its sixth annual #HAVhope Friday, a part of its [Hospitals Against Violence initiative](#) for mitigating violence in the workplace and community. #HAVhope Friday is a national day of awareness that unites hospitals, health systems, nurses, doctors and other professionals on social media to highlight programs and other violence mitigation initiatives. Download the [#HAVhope Friday digital toolkit](#) for social media posts and graphics that you can use to participate on June 3 using the #HAVhope hashtag.

PODCAST | The Beginning Stages: Establishing a pediatric mental health urgent care center

In this Members in Action [podcast](#) featuring maternal and child health efforts, Aisha Syeda, senior program manager at the AHA, is joined by Chanda Chacón, president and chief executive officer at Children's Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha, Neb. to discuss the hospital's investment in establishing a pediatric mental health urgent care center.

PODCAST | Live from AHA Annual Meeting: Meeting the challenge of delivering behavioral health

Rural hospitals are community strongholds, serving as the key point of care for nearly 20% of Americans. On this [podcast](#) we hear from three leaders from across rural America who found a way — whether it was through telehealth, outpatient or inpatient care — to deliver essential behavioral health services to the residents of their communities. [LISTEN HERE](#)

RESOURCES | AHA, partners release the Well-being 5 List

The AHA and a number of other national health care organizations published a new resource with five evidence-based action items that hospital and health system leaders can use to support the well-being of nurses, doctors and other team members during the current stage of the pandemic. The resources include examples of efforts focused on developing peer support programs, crisis documentation protocols, voluntary team redeployment, rapid improvement processes and psychological first aid training. [READ MORE](#)

BLOG | Illuminating Mental Health Equity in AAPI Communities

May was both National Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage and Mental Health Awareness month. The United States' AAPI community is among its fastest-growing minority groups, but there are still disparities when it comes to receiving culturally appropriate mental health care. Julie Kim, senior program manager for IFDHE, [shares how hospitals can approach mental health conversations](#) with the AAPI community.



COLLABORATIVE | Join the 2022 HCC cohort

The Hospital Community Collaborative is now accepting applications for its 2022 cohort. Participating health care providers and their partners will receive access to vital tools and resources to strengthen cross-sector community partnerships. **This year's cohort will focus on projects and programs that address community-level behavioral health and well-being.** [LEARN MORE](#)

EVENT | AHA Community Health Improvement Week: June 5-11, 2022

CHI Week is an annual observance week which serves as a time to celebrate and honor those working in partnership to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Downloadable inspiration cards, thank-you postcards, and an event submission form are also available on the [CHI Week webpage](#).

To see how AHA member hospitals and health systems have leveraged community partnerships to increase access to behavioral health services, download our Regional Networks: improving access to behavioral health services [executive summary](#) and [case study compendium](#).

WORTH A LOOK

- [CMS Behavioral Health Strategy Aims to Strengthen Equity, Improve Quality, and Provide Outreach to Beneficiaries](#)
 - [Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy offers recommendations to support health care workers in a new report.](#)
 - [National Academies of Medicine Draft Report: National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being](#)
 - [HHS Announces \\$2 Million Funding Opportunity to Establish National Center of Excellence on Social Media and Mental Wellness](#)
 - [HHS Announces Its First-Ever Behavioral Health Recovery Innovation Challenge](#)
 - [HRSA webinar June 7 on enhancing access to pediatric behavioral health](#)
 - [NIH published a media advisory: Depression, loneliness associated with increased hospitalization risk after COVID-19](#)
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To access past Behavioral Health Updates, [click here](#), and check out the latest resources at the [AHA Behavioral Health website](#).

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