

# Community Mental Health Program Response to COVID-19 and the Road Ahead

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ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

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# The Role of Community Mental Health Programs

Responsible for Oregon's essential behavioral health safety net services for their counties

Every CMHP is a contractor, both with their local CCOs to provide behavioral health services to people on the Oregon Health Plan and with OHA for non-Medicaid services

24/7, 365 days a year, from prevention to crisis services, and including housing, transitions between levels of care, employment and school supports

*While we focus on people with the highest behavioral health needs and risk, during a pandemic or other crisis, we serve any community member, regardless of insurance coverage.*

# Prioritizing Marginalized and Underserved Populations

CMHPs have always been on the front lines of serving marginalized populations

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The COVID-19 crisis has magnified the need for all services, including cultural/language specific care

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Infrastructure gaps and health disparities among populations have become more apparent

# COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services

- ◆ CMHPs have adapted by
  - ◆ Moving about 80% of services to telehealth/telephone
  - ◆ Using limited PPE to provide face-to-face services to people for whom telehealth services are inadequate, including critical, essential services
  - ◆ Creating isolation rooms in clinics and screening/testing before entry when possible
  - ◆ Enhancing warmlines and Senior loneliness lines, and initiating phone and in-person check-ins and brief, low barrier counseling



# Next Steps for Meeting the Need

Behavioral health need expected to double and CMHPs will need:

Testing capacity at transition points to avoid bottlenecks between levels of care

Workforce to provide more outreach and engagement services to underserved populations

Housing, phones, minutes, computers, and crisis respite to help people remain in their communities

Brief, low barrier interventions for people who have not sought behavioral health care before

Short-term funding to respond to COVID-19, and long-term funding to build and maintain local behavioral health system infrastructure and safety net services

Federal and state policy changes to ensure true parity between behavioral health and physical health