

Public Policy Conference

Washington, DC

July 19-20, 2022

NACBH

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

NACBH 2022 PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

Washington, D.C., July 19 – 20, 2022

The National Association for Children's Behavioral Health is pleased to be reconvening in person for our annual Public Policy Conference this summer. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a time of accelerated change in how behavioral health and human services are delivered, increased recognition of the needs across populations and settings, and new energy for investing in more effective approaches. Much news and surely breaking news as Congress ties up loose ends before the August recess.

"Upstream opportunities" is a good way to frame our 2022 conference program – prevention, crisis and other early intervention, school- and community-based services – current and future. We'll cover key programs supported by COVID relief and FY 2022 appropriations, and forecast what is coming in multiple mental health and child welfare bills under development now. With physical access to Congressional offices still restricted, our traditional Hill Day will be an Advocacy Afternoon led by one of *The Hill's* [Top Lobbyists](#) of 2021, including a primer on federal lobbying from a distance as well as tools you can use to translate federal policy developments to advocacy at the state and local level. A keynote on parity across the health system will set the tone for a broad view of the behavioral health landscape, and a timely snapshot of Family First implementation will bring us up to date on an important intersecting system.

NACBH conferences are known for targeted content and lively colloquy. Who attends? Senior leaders of children's behavioral health and child welfare organizations, state provider association executives, advocates from colleague national organizations, and representatives of the accrediting bodies. We hope you'll join us to contribute your expertise and perspective!

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Updated 06/07/22

Tuesday, July 19

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.

Registration and Breakfast

8:45 – 9:15 a.m.

Welcoming Remarks and Conference Overview

Charlene Hoobler, Chief Operating Officer, The Barry Robinson Center and NACBH President

Pat Johnston, Director of Public Policy, NACBH

NACBH

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

9:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Keynote: Mental Health and Addiction Parity: A Call to Advance Enforcement and Increase Uptake Across the Health System

Ali Khawar [invited]
Acting Assistant Secretary
and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Employee Benefits Security Administration
Department of Labor

In late 2021, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury issued their 2022 Report to Congress on the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. Findings clearly indicate that more than 13 years after passage of MHPAEA – which closed many gaps in the 1996 federal Mental Health Parity Act – health plans continue to skirt both the letter and the spirit of the law.

Since his appointment to the head of the Employee Benefits Security Administration, Mr. Khawar has used the full authority of his office to enforce MHPAEA and improve EBSA’s guidance and compliance tools. Leveraging the spotlight shone on shortcomings across the health system during the COVID pandemic, he is actively engaging with stakeholders, as he will during our conference, to emphasize the department’s commitment to close every loophole in its jurisdiction and support partner agencies and advocates in their roles to realize the full potential of the law.

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Family First Prevention Services Act Implementation: National Snapshot

Christie Appelhanz
Regional Administrator, Region 7
and Acting Regional administrator, Region 3
Administration for Children and Families

The landmark Family First Prevention Services Act was the farthest-reaching reform of federal child welfare policy in decades, and full implementation will be a years-long process. An early phase is exercising new flexibilities in IV-E funding to prevent children from entering foster care. Ms. Appelhanz will join us to provide a highly-anticipated snapshot of where states are in their planning and implementation of prevention services, including which have submitted prevention plans to the Children’s Bureau and trends in what they are choosing to cover.

The role of the IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse and what states may be covering separately through their Medicaid plans will also be discussed, as well as the data elements that states are required to report on and CQI activities focused on fidelity to approved intervention models. Ms. Appelhanz will outline the technical assistance that the bureau is providing to states, for both prevention services and the establishment of Quality Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs), and the ACF-CMS joint technical guide for state IV-E and Medicaid agencies to ensure timely, effective data sharing about children served by both programs.



10:45 – 11:05 a.m.

Break

11:05 – 12:00 noon

Family First Implementation: Ground Level

This time is designed as an opportunity to process the Children’s Bureau’s presentation, review Family First amendments proposed by the President’s FY 2023 Budget, and an open forum for conference participants to share information, questions, and strategies around how Family First is rolling out in your states.

12:00 – 1:45 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

The Federal Role in Improving Access to Community-Based Services for Children, Adolescents, and Their Families

Melinda Baldwin, Ph.D., LCSW
Division Director
Division of Prevention, Traumatic Stress, and Special Programs
Center for Mental Health Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

In her role as Division Director, Dr. Baldwin oversees the activities of the Child, Adolescent & Family Branch, the Mental Health Promotion Branch, and the Emergency Mental Health & Traumatic Stress Services Branch of CMHS. To that work, she brings a Ph.D. in Social Work and more than 11 years as a Child Welfare Program Specialist and Child Welfare Staff Development Specialist at the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families.

We welcome her to the program to bring us up to date on SAMHSA’s ongoing and new initiatives for children and families, including collaboration with other federal agencies. Whether grants that providers may apply for or funding for states or localities that you can support, the portfolio is broad and meaningful. Dr. Baldwin will also discuss the July 2022 implementation of the 988 dialing code for the expanded suicide prevention and crisis hotline and how you can help ensure its success.

2:45 – 3:40 p.m.

State Mental Health Directors: Programs and Priorities for Children

Aaron J. (A.J.) Walker, MPA
Senior Policy Associate
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

As stewards of the SAMHSA-funded Community Mental Health Block Grants and state appropriations, state mental health commissioners must both plan ahead and respond to changing conditions for their targeted populations: adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. NASMHPD is the national organization representing their collective interests, providing federal policy



guidance, training and technical assistance, and a division/council structure for special population program directors.

Mr. Walker will provide background on how the block grant funds are spent, including set-asides for children, crisis services, and evidence-based interventions to address early serious mental illness, as well as trends in how state mental health commissioners are coordinating with other state agencies and stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive approach to community needs. He will fill us in on how federal appropriations have (or have not) addressed gaps exposed by the COVID pandemic, current hot topics for NASMHPD’s membership, and their legislative priorities for Congress going forward.

3:40 – 4:00 p.m.

Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Community Behavioral Health Centers: Tapping a National Resource to Leverage Policy and Practice

Reyna Taylor, MS, MBA
Vice President, Policy and Advocacy
National Council for Mental Wellbeing

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing represents over 3,100 mental health and substance use treatment organizations serving more than 10 million children, adults and families each year. Evolving over time from community mental health centers to community behavioral health centers, to now also include Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers, the centers have continuously adapted to changing norms and needs, expanding their role, reach, and partnerships to become an effective gateway to comprehensive health and social services.

In her role as Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy, Ms. Taylor leads public policy and government affairs activities, supervises legislative matters, and guides overall public policy strategy at the state and federal levels. Her presentation will focus on services for children and adolescents: how they are evolving with COVID lessons learned, how additional funding under various COVID relief appropriations have been used to enhance them, relevant policies and practices developed under the demonstration program for Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers, and how you can effectively partner with centers in your communities. We particularly look forward to learning about the new Child & Family-Focused CCBHC Learning Community, launched in collaboration with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and the Institute for Innovation and Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

5:00 – 5:10 p.m.

Day 1 Wrap-up and Day 2 Preview

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Reception



Wednesday, July 20

8:15 – 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Medicaid and Children’s Behavioral Health: A View From the States

Jack Rollins
Director of Federal Policy
National Association of Medicaid Directors

The National Association of Medicaid Directors convenes a highly effective learning community of state Medicaid leaders, fosters a strong state-federal partnership at the national level, and engages the provider community through organizations like NACBH. This year, we welcome Mr. Rollins back to the podium for an update on NAMD’s federal legislative and regulatory priorities for improving the delivery of children’s behavioral health services.

The eventual end of the public health emergency will require a massive unwinding of the continuous Medicaid and CHIP enrollment policy that has been in effect for over two years, requiring eligibility redeterminations for millions of beneficiaries across the country. What federal flexibilities might be needed? What can providers anticipate in terms of your interactions with state Medicaid agencies, and how can you be helpful? Please be prepared to share information about conversations in your state legislatures or state provider associations to address the looming task.

10:00 – 10:45 a.m.

Not Such a Small Niche: Children’s Health Takes Center Stage

Cynthia Whitney
Manager, Federal Affairs
Children’s Hospital Association

Children’s hospitals and behavioral health providers are natural allies, and we hope this session will encourage more relationships in communities you both serve. Ms. Whitney’s experience before joining the Children’s Hospital Association includes senior policy roles at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Psychological Association – a fitting perspective for our conversation during this session. She will introduce us to CHA’s membership and the unique role of children’s specialty hospitals, the behavioral health services provided by some and additional resources needed by all, and the increasing urgency among CHA members to identify mental health solutions for the children and families they serve.

NACBH is a partner in the Sound the Alarm for Kids campaign. Led by CHA, AACAP, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, the goals of the campaign are to promote federal legislation and funding to address the soaring rates of depression, anxiety, trauma, loneliness and suicidality among children and youth today. Ms. Whitney will fill us in on the campaign and how you can contribute, and highlight legislative priorities for remainder of this Congressional session.



10:45 – 11:05 a.m.

Break

11:05 – 11:45 a.m.

Back to School: The Expanding Need, Evidence, and Opportunities for School-Based Services and Supports

Sharon Hoover, Ph.D.

Professor, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Co-Director, National Center for School Mental Health

and Director, National Child Traumatic Stress Network Center for Safe Supportive Schools

University of Maryland School of Medicine

Identifying the multiple hats Dr. Hoover wears says almost all we need to about her place on this conference program. We would also like to highlight her testimony during a Senate Finance Committee hearing earlier this year, focused on addressing the mental health crisis among children and youth – what works and what is needed to bring those efforts to scale. Her presentation today will reprise the policy recommendations in her testimony, and outline the work of the Hopeful Futures Campaign to shed light on the crisis and provide school-based solutions to improve the response. From her national leadership position, Dr. Hoover will share her thoughts on how community trauma has changed expectations for healthy school culture, and how provider organizations can support your local schools beyond offering treatment services to students.

11:45 – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Advocacy Afternoon

The description of the afternoon will be updated closer to the conference as we learn of the availability of key Congressional staff members to drop in from Capitol Hill.

Remote Advocacy: Effective Federal Lobbying From a Distance

Katrina Velasquez, Esq., MA, Managing Principal

and Allison Ivie, MPP, MA, Vice President

Center Road Solutions

Overview of Mental Health and Child Welfare Legislative Proposals and Talking Points for NACBH's Top Priorities

Pat Johnston

Translating Federal Policy Developments to State/Local Advocacy Action

Laurel Stine

Senior Vice President, Public Policy [invited]

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



5:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Michele Madley, Chief Executive Officer, Gibault Children’s Services
and NACBH Vice President/President-Elect

Jennifer Duckworth, Association Director, NACBH

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Registration and hotel information: <https://www.nacbh.org/public-policy-conference>