

# CBH

Grassroots Advocacy

Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland

Power in Numbers



# Things to Keep in Mind

- There are between 1500 and 2000 bills introduced every session. Legislators rely on experts (that's you!) to help them decide
- Constituents are important to legislators
- Don't let party affiliation stand in the way
- Like most folks, legislators are more likely to do favors for someone they know
- The best time to get to know a legislator is in the session interim
- Always remember to say thanks after your legislator has responded

# Successes in the 2019 Session

- 3.5% rate increase (2<sup>nd</sup> installment of KTDO)
- Rate increases in minimum wage bill (21.75% FY 21 through FY 26)
- Defeat of carve-in legislation
- Passage of bill allowing 20-hour onsite medical director requirement to be met via telehealth
- Passage of bill allowing a psych NP to be a prescriber on ACT teams via telehealth (without jeopardizing fidelity)
- Passage of bill allowing Psych NPs to act as OMHC medical directors (also via telehealth)
- Passage of bill decriminalizing suicide attempts
- Beware Michael Meyers and BRFA!!

# Successes in the 2019 Session

	Inflation Adjustments to Rate
FY97	0%
FY98	0%
FY99	0%
FY00	0%
FY01	0%
FY02	0%
FY03	0%
FY04	0%
FY05	0%
FY06	0%
FY07	4%
FY08	2%
FY09	2%

	Inflation Adjustments to Rate
FY11	0%
FY12	0%
FY13	0.88%
FY14	2.54%
FY15	1%
FY16	0%
FY17	2%
FY18	2%
FY19	3.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19.9%</b>

# It's Time to Make an Invitation: How to Start

- Learn about the person you intend to contact – Google is your friend.
  - Elected Official
  - Chief of Staff
  - Policy Director
  - Legislative Aides
  - Interns

# Contact is Made

To extend an invitation to an event/tour/meeting email, phone, or social media ( direct message, not public) can be used. Some strategies to keep in mind:

- Relate your invitation to their district/area and constituents needs.
- Remain apolitical – party affiliation does not matter if you feel they can help.
- Be direct with you goals and intentions for the meeting.
- Be flexible with meeting times and location.
- Be respectful of their time, especially when Annapolis is in session.

# Contact is Made – cont.

- Follow up weekly with gentle reminders of the extended invitation and a reminder why you would like to meet the person.
- Requests for appointments during session will usually take place in Annapolis.
- Invitations to visit your agency will take place after session, if you visit the person or stop by the office when they are in session plant the seed for a visit after session.

# Contact is Made – cont.

- **Initial invitation to elected officials/staff for meeting or event participation. This format serves both letter and email.**
- Dear official,
- Introduction paragraph
- This is your chance to make a brief intro of yourself and your agency with an immediate link to your official's district/area/constituency. 2-4 sentences.
  - Be sure to specify what you actually do, i.e- behavioral health, substance use, early childhood, etc.
  - Include brief demographic stats on:
    - Number of people served
    - Locations of offices and length of time in business
    - Number of staff



# Contact is Made – cont.

- Second paragraph
- This is where you make your ask, explain, but be precise and to the point. 4-6 sentences
  - Draw parallels with the policy goals of your official
  - Impress the needs of their constituency and how your ask will benefit them directly
- Third paragraph
- Wrap it up 2-4 sentences
  - Thank them for taking the time to consider your request
  - Thank them for their support of their constituents needs and well being
  - Offer flexibility in meeting, remember your goal is to secure their attendance at an event or meeting.
  - Invite them to speak to you further for questions clarification
- Sincerely,
- *Your name, credentials*
- *Title*
- *Agency*
- *Phone/email*

# The Visit

## At Your Agency

- Be sure your staff is aware of who is coming especially your front desk person.
- Have your meeting room set up with refreshments, at least water, and an agenda for the visit.
- We do a brief power point presentation about the agency.
- We do a tour of the facility and end the tour in a room where we have adult clients who would like to speak to the person. Staff does a lot of prep work with the clients for this part.

# The Visit – Cont.

- After the client time we return to the conference room for a wrap up and questions. This is the time when the ask is done for support or not of any upcoming legislation for the next session.
- Our Senior Management staff is asked to attend any visits by elected officials as a spokesperson for their divisions.
- Throughout the meeting our social media group is taking pictures and putting them on Instagram and twitter.
- After the meeting the social media group creates a post for our Facebook page.

# The Visit – Cont.

## Visit in Annapolis:

- Make the appointment as you would for an on-site visit.
- Be on time for the appointment, the timetable for the official is tight.
- Have an agenda of topics you would like to cover. If the person is not familiar with your organization educate them about it.
- It is important to let Lori and Shannon know who are going to meet so if they would like to attend with you they can.

# Last Suggestions

For both visits:

- Send reminders before your visit and make sure the person making the appointment has your phone number in case of last minute changes.
- This is a great time to give the person some swag from your agency such as mugs, pens, etc.
- Always have the printouts from CBH about the issues you are addressing and any other print information you would like to include. We put these in a folder with our logo and business cards.
- Remember to send thank you notes to all who were involved.