



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

May 20, 2021

Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan CEOs, Directors and Staff
Community Mental Health Services Program CEOs, Directors and Staff
Behavioral Health Providers

Dear CEOs, Directors, Providers, and Staff:

As we observe Mental Health Awareness Month during May, we want to acknowledge the efforts all of you have made in shoring up the mental well-being of Michiganders during one of the most challenging periods in history for public health. Your dedicated clinical care, unwavering emergency response, tireless advocacy, and careful administrative oversight have benefitted thousands of public behavioral health service recipients and countless others.

All too often, we measure outcomes by what happens in the negative, such as how many people succumbed to suicide or an opioid overdose. Yet, it is impossible to know how many lives have been saved by prevention, intervention, and treatment, along with recovery supports. You have done this hard work, always stretched by limited resources and ongoing demand. You have persevered in the face of staffing shortages, turnover, and funding of programs constrained by new task demands and service needs.

While the public behavioral health systems across our nation can be improved, Michigan has much to be proud of. Your accomplishments are too numerous to count and go well beyond assisting with crises, information access, community supports, and transition strategies for Michigan residents in need.

For all you have done to improve mental well-being of your staff, colleagues, and the people of Michigan, we thank you. For all you are doing to help provide an infrastructure of supports and services for people with mental illness, youth with serious emotional disturbances, individuals of all ages who struggle with substance use disorders, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we thank you. And for having phone numbers available for any Michigander who may need to call for referral or support, we thank you.

PIHPs, CMHSPs, BH Providers

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We are grateful for your hard work and dedication to the cause. Together we can combat the stigma associated with mental illness and make our world a better place where our bodies and minds can be healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Hertel".

Elizabeth Hertel
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joneigh S. Khaldun".

Joneigh S. Khaldun, MD, MPH, FACEP
Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy Director for Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen Jansen".

Allen Jansen
Senior Deputy Director
Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration