



December 8, 2021

Dear Governor Wolf,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS), a provider association with over 70 provider members, I am pleased to provide this letter of support and urge you to include in your proposed FY 2022-23 Budget, funding to strengthen mental health providers, so that they can offer the best care possible for Pennsylvania's children.

An investment of \$50,000 per licensed PA residential bed and \$50,000 per licensed PA Medicaid, acute in-patient mental health bed would offer providers the flexibility to use a variety of strategies to hire, train and retain a new workforce and quickly open more "beds," thereby diverting children from emergency rooms, hospital beds, detention centers and shelters.

Our industry is completely dependent on people. Today, many providers are only able to staff programs at about 50% of their required staffing levels, which limits their ability to meet their missions. A recent survey concluded a significant number of providers have had to close beds, permanently downsize, and/or permanently close their doors.

Referrals for services have increased in many programs. However, when providers don't have the staff needed to provide lifesaving services, the result is children are left languishing in emergency rooms, detention centers and shelters until an appropriate placement can be found. This is not acceptable. Our provider organizations have houses, rooms, beds, schools, food, and beautiful campuses. We all want these children in safe, therapeutic and supportive environments. And while these children languish, the longer they go without treatment, their disease progresses. In many cases, new layers of trauma are added.

We urge you to include in your proposed FY 2022-23 Budget, a one-time appropriation to mental health providers using ARPA funds. With this life-saving investment in services for providers across the Commonwealth, the Governor can make a significant improvement in the mental health of Pennsylvania's children.

PCCYFS, in representing the needs of its provider membership, fully supports this request and urges this one time appropriation to be made before it is too late. Thank you for your time and support.

Respectfully Yours,

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President & CEO

<https://pccyfs.org/member-directory/>

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PCCYFS is a leading statewide membership organization serving as a united voice for our valued partners through education, data, resources, and advocacy towards achieving a brighter future for children, youth, and families.