



September 2022 Legislative Updates

- **Update on DPSCS issue:** Scott spoke to Rose. As you may have seen, it was recently announced that state employees will be getting a 4.5% COLA. Per Rose, the administration dragged their feet on the finalizing this COLA, which resulted in the numbers needed to begin salary negotiations were delayed by a few weeks. Rose reported that she is now working on getting dates scheduled with DBM to have the initial meetings of the salary negotiation process. We'll remain in communication with Rose and flag when LCPCM action (i.e. letter of support/outreach to legislators) if warranted.
- **General Workforce Shortage - Representation on the Education and Pathways Committee:** Delegate Kelly and the Chair of the Workforce Shortage Commission asked Robyn to serve on the Education and Pathways Committee because of her institutional knowledge about state initiatives related to healthcare workforce shortages. The next meeting is later this week, so we'll be reporting back.
- **School Health Workforce Shortage:**
 - **Representation on the Community Health Center, SBHC, and School Health Workforce Subcommittee:** Robyn has been asked to sit on this subcommittee which will make recommendations to the Workforce Data Workgroup. We think there is potential to advocate for obtaining workforce data by setting – which will provide insight into shortages in school and community health center settings. We'll keep you looped in. We might be able to use this to advance issues related to behavioral health shortages in school; and because of the importance of Medicare billing to community health centers, we'll be able to raise it there.
 - **We received an interesting question on school health funding:** Some legislators have asked their committee counsel to research Medicaid reimbursement for school health. This staff person reached out to Robyn and Scott, who met with him and provided a lot of background information. We're not sure what will come of this, but it is a positive sign that legislators are talking about school health, and we've got our eye closely on it.

- **Behavioral Health Blueprint:** Legislative leaders have begun drafting legislation to develop a multi-year behavioral health “blueprint” intended to:
 - Ensure access to appropriate levels of mental health and substance use disorder care – regardless of age, race, gender, family status, language;
 - Assist people in accessing needed care, and moving effectively between needed levels of care and recovery support; and
 - Increase coordination of services and communication among providers to better help people in need of services.

The legislation will include the creation of a commission to develop the longer-range plan, and additional action items related to the behavioral health system that can be implemented in the first year of a new Administration.

Having heard about that this legislation might be in the works, Robyn met with Delegate Cullison last week about the raised the billing issue for the dually eligible. She said she'd support our advocacy on the topic, and we discussed possibility including that the Maryland Department of Health fix it within this blueprint legislation. We'll keep you posted. It may not take legislation to achieve the goal, but it's nice to have it as a possibility.