

Health Care Authority's Behavioral Health response to COVID-19

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Response overview

- ▶ Weekly Provider calls host over 400 prevention, treatment, and recovery providers
- ▶ Created a general and specific email box
- ▶ Distribute a weekly Provider newsletter
- ▶ Worked with the managed care plans to immediately implement improvements and begin a financial assistance program for providers
- ▶ Made contract changes to assist providers in obtaining payment

Telehealth

- ▶ Policy changes Federal and State
- ▶ Zoom - Health Care Authority procured Zoom technology for telehealth for behavioral health and physical health providers
- ▶ Smart Phone Distribution – Specifically for tele-health and support to families
- ▶ Loaner laptops - Available to providers and other state agencies for BH program supports
- ▶ Success Stories – BH Providers are sharing how they are meeting challenges and finding successes including ways to continue prevention, treatment, and/or recovery activities using telehealth platforms
- ▶ After-Hour/Weekend Rate – Medicaid services provided using a telecommunication method

Washington Listens



- ▶ Funded jointly through FEMA and SAMHSA
- ▶ Provides non-clinical support to people experiencing elevated stress due to COVID-19
- ▶ Speak to a support specialist to receive information and connection to community resources in their area
- ▶ The goal of the program is to lessen the strain on the crisis line

Challenges then and now

- ▶ Limited infection control knowledge from DBHR and BH providers at outset
- ▶ Behavioral health integration and the timing of COVID
 - ▶ Impact to providers and workforce, particularly challenging
 - ▶ Intensive communication with providers and MCOs; increase accountability for plan performance, which they are demonstrating improved performance
- ▶ Continued challenges with PPE for residential providers
 - ▶ Working with JIC and local emergency management to ensure PPE guidelines are followed
- ▶ Concerns about changes to current flexibility around telehealth, privacy, and corresponding rules once the Federal emergency ends
 - ▶ Cross-agency workgroup to work on state and federal issues going forward
- ▶ Monitoring Center for Medicaid and Medicare regarding changes in regulations for telehealth to be extended
- ▶ We continue to work on addressing health inequities

