



MARYLAND  
Department of Health

Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health  
Administration

**Local Systems Management Integration Plan  
Brief Summary**

July 2018

**Overview**

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) has been moving toward strategic integration of behavioral health, including administrative functions, funding streams, and local systems management. As such, the FY17 Behavioral Health Plan set forth the vision to provide “improved health, wellness, and quality of life for individuals across the life span through a seamless and integrated behavioral health system of care.” The FY17 Maryland State budget reaffirmed the “policy imperative to fully integrate behavioral health services in the State” and directed the BHA to study the feasibility, costs, and benefits of merging Core Service Agencies (CSAs) with the Local Addictions Authorities (LAAs) into Local Behavioral Health Authorities (LBHAs).

***Integrating systems  
management functions  
ensures a patient-centered,  
“no wrong door” experience.***

In follow-up to the study, leaders across

Maryland are bringing together the oversight and management of publicly-funded mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, recovery, and gambling addiction services. BHA is working with all 24 local jurisdictions to implement the **Local Systems Management Integration Plan**<sup>1</sup> to improve health, wellness, and quality of life for people across the life span through a seamless and integrated behavioral health system of care. The goal is to support the delivery of high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate, person-centered behavioral health experiences in a timely manner, regardless of which “door” a person enters the system.

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<sup>1</sup> *This high-level summary provides a bird’s eye view of the comprehensive BHA Local Systems Management Integration Plan. Additional details can be found in the complete document available from BHA on request.*

# What is Behavioral Health Systems Management and Why Do We Need it?

Systems management involves planning, managing, and monitoring activities for the local publicly funded behavioral health system. This includes ensuring coordination among providers, engaging in data-driven decision-making, and addressing issues such as network adequacy and quality improvement. These functions are distinct from directly providing services or operating treatment programs, and they play a vitally important role in each local jurisdiction's efforts to improve health outcomes by ensuring that patients receive timely access to services in a seamless, efficient way.

## What is the Integration Plan and How Did it Come About?

The Local Systems Management Integration Plan was developed in response to a legislative requirement, as described above. The purpose of the Integration Plan is to provide clarity, support, and a consistent framework to guide progress toward integrated systems management, **while affirming the importance of local control and flexibility in design.**

### Pathways to Integration

1. Achieve Greater Clarity Regarding BHA Expectations
2. Support Local Jurisdictions in Their Collaborative Integration Processes
3. Create a Learning Community for peer-to-peer sharing of lessons and ideas
4. Establish Metrics and Methods to Ensure Accountability for Outcomes

The Integration Plan lays out a **Roadmap** with pathways and milestones to mark progress toward full systems management integration. It includes a **Systems Management Integration Toolkit** with several elements to support local jurisdictions in their processes to increase integration. Working with key partners, local jurisdictions can adapt and use the tools that are relevant to their situation and needs, tailored to reflect their approach to managing the change process.

The Integration Plan was developed in collaboration with local and statewide stakeholders. Over the past year, BHA has conducted interviews and listening sessions, held individual discussions, and convened a diverse advisory group to assess the landscape and develop the integration Roadmap. In the next phase, state and local leaders will focus on implementing the Integration Plan. The diagram below shows timing and activities in this effort:

#### Phase 1: Summer to Fall 2017

- Baseline Analysis and Report to General Assembly

#### Phase 2: Fall 2017 to Spring 2018

- Develop Overall Plan to Support Local Integration

#### Phase 3: Spring 2018 to Summer 2022

- Implement Plan: Activities at BHA and Local Levels

The newly chartered “**Learning Community**,” as outlined in the Integration Plan, will help local jurisdictions learn from peers and other experts. In the sessions, they will address technical and operational needs, and explore useful models, best practices, and approaches to process

improvement to support local progress toward full systems management integration.

### **Leading the Charge**

*By the end of FY19, BHA will:*

- ✓ Refine parameters for local systems management, including simplified annual plan guidelines
- ✓ Publish BHA Policies and Procedures online for use by local jurisdictions
- ✓ Complete six sessions of the Learning Community

The Integration Plan describes activities for which there is shared accountability between local jurisdictions and BHA. This involves open lines of communication and feedback loops to listen, learn, and refine approaches. In addition, input and ideas from individuals, families, providers, and other stakeholders will be gathered and factored into the planning and discussions.

### **What’s Next?**

BHA will oversee implementation of the Integration Plan between FY19 and FY22. This will include **outreach and engagement with interested stakeholders** to keep everyone apprised of progress at the local and state levels. In FY19, BHA will continue to work with local jurisdictions to **clarify key policies and procedures** that address state goals while allowing flexibility to meet local behavioral health needs. The Maryland Association of Behavioral Health Authorities (MABHA) and BHA will jointly manage a **Learning Community** for local jurisdictions, BHA, Medicaid, and others to strengthen systems management integration.

At the local level, leaders from the LBHA, or CSA and LAA, will convene key partners to complete one self-assessment for their local jurisdiction then develop a plan to increase integration of their local systems management. The goal is, by FY21, local jurisdictions will take a comprehensive, integrated approach to

systems management for their local publicly-funded behavioral health system through a single point of accountability. Each local jurisdiction will determine their preferred structure, subject to BHA review and approval, and may combine efforts to take a regional approach to integrated systems management that involves more than one local jurisdiction.

#### **Local Jurisdiction—Steps Toward Greater Integration (FY19-FY22)**

- 1) Communicate the purpose of systems management integration to local stakeholders.
- 2) Determine the current level of local integration of core systems management functions using the Self-Assessment Tool.
- 3) Work with local stakeholders to define and implement a local plan to further integrate systems management in their jurisdiction.

## How Will Integration Be Assessed?

Each local jurisdiction will self-assess their level of integration in key areas using an easy-to-follow tool designed for this project by BHA and local jurisdiction leaders. The “Self-Assessment Tool” describes seven systems management functions *along a continuum of integration* ranging from basic level (*approaching*) to mid-level (*capable*) to integrated (*enhanced ability*), plus ways that local jurisdictions can identify accomplishments and areas where more progress is needed. Over time, the Assessment Tool will be used to evaluate local progress toward greater integration. Results from each local self-assessment will help inform plans for the Learning Community to ensure that training and technical assistance is focused on topics that help meet systems management integration needs as identified by local jurisdictions.

**With the goal of providing a high quality, person-centered experience, local jurisdictions will assess their level of integration regarding:**

- Leadership and Governance
- Budgeting and Operations
- Planning and Data-driven Decision Making
- Quality
- Public outreach, individual, and family education
- Collaboration with stakeholders
- Workforce recruitment, training and development, and retention

## Conclusion

Behavioral health systems management integration will continue to be in transition at the state and local levels. Completing this complex transition will take a few years and require continued strategic and operational planning, stakeholder engagement, multi-directional communication, technical guidance and informational support, and adaptation by public and private organizations in local jurisdictions and at the state level. For more information, or for a copy of the full Behavioral Health Local Systems Management Integration Plan, contact:

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