



Maryland
Hospital Association

Dear Colleague:

With Maryland's hospitals on the front lines of the behavioral health crisis, and often the providers of last resort for people having no place else to turn, it's essential to ensure an adequate supply and distribution of providers throughout the care system.

A decades-long state practice that has cut the number of state-operated psychiatric beds has resulted in hospital patients remaining for days, weeks, and even longer, waiting for space in more appropriate settings to become available. The situation is not viable for our hospitals and does a disservice to patients.

This is why MHA has made it a priority to advocate for resources to bolster access to behavioral health treatment. To help with that effort, we need to educate legislators on the types of services that are lacking in your communities for behavioral health patients who are ready to be discharged but are, essentially, stuck due to limited room in non-hospital facilities.

We need your help to collect data on this issue via a study that will identify factors that contribute to discharge delays for patients who should be served in lower acuity settings, but are unable to be placed. While the study focus is on inpatient behavioral health units, there is the opportunity for other medical units, serving a high volume of behavioral health patients or with excessive behavioral health patient boarding, to participate. For additional information on this project, share [this recording](#) of an informational webinar with interested hospital staff.

Your participation in this 90-day effort will allow us to turn anecdotes into actionable data.

Please take a few minutes to:

- Review the materials included with this letter
- Share this information with your hospital's behavioral health team and discuss how your hospital can participate
- Ask your team to contact Erin Dorrien at edorrien@mhaonline.org with any questions or concerns
- Sign and return, by **August 3, 2018**, the **CEO Hospital Commitment Letter to participate in the *Behavioral Health Capacity Study***.

Thank you in advance for participating in this effort.