

Key Talking Points: The General Assembly's Proposed Budget Cuts



- Shortsighted budget cuts to the state's public behavioral health system will not only risk the well-being of our citizens, but also our communities.
- In past years, the General Assembly has reduced LME/MCO cash balances by non-recurring reductions. The organizations have been required to spend more than \$450 million on one-time services instead of reinvesting in our communities.
- Over the last four years, the General Assembly has cut \$48 million in funding to Vaya.
- This year, the proposed Senate budget is even worse. It deepens the recurring reduction in state mental health funding to more than \$100 million over two years.
- The Senate has proposed additional funding reductions to Vaya of \$12.7 million over the next two years with no equity formula to balance the reductions.
- Local governments will have to pick up the tab if the fiscal condition of the LME/MCOs deteriorates during their transition to Tailored Plans. It's a risky strategy to assume the LME/MCOs will continue to generate sufficient cash to fill the hole.
- When you jeopardize behavioral health, the whole community feels the effect, with more people showing up in our emergency rooms for mental health crises or overdoses.
- LME/MCOs provide critical services to more than 2 million Medicaid-eligible and uninsured North Carolinians with mental health, substance use and intellectual/developmental disabilities each year.
- I've seen firsthand the tremendous impact these services have on residents and our entire community.
- Did you know that this funding supports local initiatives?
 - Crisis walk-in services
The proposed budget cuts would force reductions to those services, which would in turn increase the demands on local Emergency Departments and jail systems.
 - Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) centers in Buncombe/Haywood counties
The proposed budget cuts would limit the number of people those centers can serve, creating more demands on local Emergency Departments.
 - Local law enforcement programs in Buncombe/Henderson counties
 - Development of the Wilkes County Facility Based Crisis Center
The proposed budget cuts would eliminate the funding available for operating costs.

- Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) services
The proposed budget cuts would reduce the availability of that service in the counties Vaya serves.
- With the proposed cuts, these programs may no longer be possible.
- Our state's LME/MCOs are no longer able to sustain these cuts.
- I hope lawmakers will look beyond partisanship to the people who will be impacted. We must ensure those who need help the most don't fall through the cracks.