

**HOUSE BUDGET PROPOSAL INCLUDES CUTS
TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FUNDING
PLEASE CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS ON THURSDAY, MAY 19 AND
FRIDAY, MAY 20**

Governor Corbett's proposed budget protected funding for behavioral health services to the extent possible given his pledge of no new taxes. The House Republican budget proposal (HB 1485) does not protect the funding. Instead it cuts \$470 million from the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) budget to restore a portion of the Governor's proposed cuts to basic and higher education, including significant cuts to the Behavioral Health Services Initiative (BHSI) and the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP). Specifically:

- BHSI was cut by \$4.3 million (8.26%) in the House budget proposal. BHSI provides both mental health and drug and alcohol treatment for individuals with a low income who do not qualify for Medicaid. If the House proposal is implemented, the BHSI budget will have been cut by \$9.5 million since fiscal year 2007-2008, a 16.6% cut over four years.
- The House proposal cuts \$4.322 million from the state mental health base dollars. While this cut is less than 1%, when combined with the BHSI decrease, the overall impact on community based services is significant – a loss of over \$8.5 million.
- The House budget proposal cuts \$9.6 million (12.9%) from the Governor's proposed budget from MATP. Federal regulations require that the Medical Assistance Program assure that transportation is available for individuals to access needed services. Demand has continued to grow for the county based MATP program, which is crucial for many Pennsylvanians who have no other options to go to medical appointments.
- The House proposal also makes cuts to Medicaid funding based on the supposition that a percentage of individuals currently receiving Medicaid funding are not eligible – a supposition that has no concrete facts to support it.

The House budget maintains the Governor's proposed total budget of \$27.3 billion. Since the Governor introduced his budget, state revenues have exceeded projections and the state is currently sitting on a surplus estimated between \$100 million and \$500 million. Both the Governor and the House leadership have refused to consider including a portion of the surplus to avoid making devastating cuts.

The House Appropriations Committee has approved House Bill 1485 and the **House will vote on the proposed budget when they return to Harrisburg the week of May 23.** After that vote, the focus of the budget will move to the Senate.

CALL TO ACTION

Members of the General Assembly are in their districts this week and it is critical that they hear from you. Tell them the House budget proposal will hurt a vulnerable population.

- **Communicate with your legislators** either in person, by phone, by letter or via email. See accompanying attachment Provided is a sample outline of talking points for you to use in your communication. The outline includes the following points:
 - House proposed budget details
 - who you are and why this issue is important to you
 - a few discussion points to stress the need
 - include a clear message regarding what you are asking -- we have outlined a concise ask in the sample outline. It is critical that we keep “the ask” consistent.

To find your legislator, go to:

http://www.namiswpa.org/content/legislative_alerts/find_official.php

- **Communicate what you have done** – visits and calls made to legislators – to Sharon Miller at smiller@namiswpa.org or 1-888-264-7972