



## FY24 BUDGET

# \$500K FOR A CENTER FOR HEALTH INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS (CHIA) STUDY OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (BHCA) UTILIZATION (CHIA 4100-0600)

## THE PROBLEM

In Massachusetts, private, fully-insured health plans must cover certain community-based behavioral health intermediate care services for children and adolescents, known as Behavioral Health for Children and Adolescents (BHCA) services. There is a concern that youth with private insurance are not receiving BHCA services, despite growing need. In December 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a public health advisory, calling for a nationwide response to the youth mental health crisis. More recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that some populations are suffering disproportionately. For example, nearly one in three teenage girls have seriously considering suicide, and more than half of LGBTQ+ students had recently experienced poor mental health in the past year and more than 1 in 5 had attempted suicide. (CDC, February 2023).

## WHAT THIS LINE ITEM ACHIEVES

- This budget request provides funding for a study to determine if insurance carriers operating in Massachusetts are honoring the requirement (issued in 2019 by the Division of Insurance (DOI) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH)) to provide coverage for BHCA services.
- At this point, there are adequate claims data to evaluate payments for BHCA services, any transition from Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) to BHCA claims and payments, and payments for BHCA services by carriers and by plan members.
- Our request is not reflected in H1.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Prior to this requirement, families with private insurance would access such services by enrolling in MassHealth as a secondary insurer and participating in the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). In imposing this requirement for private insurance coverage, the Commonwealth wanted private insurance carriers to step up and assume the responsibility to provide the BHCA benefit for their young members. This study is important to see if private carriers have assumed that responsibility.

### For more information:

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