

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 West Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201



We are poised to begin a process to improve the integration of care across behavioral health and somatic domains. This process, which I have been asked to lead, will be transparent, participatory, and open-minded. In pursuing this work, I want to offer some assurances.

First, this effort will depend on the expertise, insights, and input from all stakeholders, inside and outside the Department. I readily acknowledge that I lack expertise in behavioral health services in Maryland, and I am eager to learn.

Second, we will begin this process with a clean sheet of paper. We do not have a pre-determined outcome in mind with respect to the model, financing, or approach to systems. The only given is that we will move forward with a shared goal of better integrating and aligning services across domains.

Third, this process will not denigrate what is working now. The goal is not to tear down existing systems and start over. Rather, it is about building upon the strengths in our existing systems to strengthen the aspects that are working well and to improve the linkages and incentives within and across systems. We will focus on the consumer, and on designing an approach to meet the needs of the whole consumer.

At each step we will seek input, feedback, recommendations, and advice. I look forward to seeing many of you on March 14. Through workgroups and larger stakeholder meetings you will also have the chance to comment. To prove the point: we look forward to receiving your comments on the documents we distributed earlier this week. Please send any written comments, through the end of March, to bhintegration@dhmh.state.md.us. We'll incorporate and share those comments, and begin this shared enterprise.

I invite you to stay up-to-date regarding Maryland's behavioral health integration efforts at [www.http://dhmh.maryland.gov/bhd/SitePages/integrationefforts.aspx](http://dhmh.maryland.gov/bhd/SitePages/integrationefforts.aspx). We will update this website in the coming days, and it will be the source for all materials and information on an ongoing basis.

I look forward to working with you during this process as we move toward a financing and integration model that promotes high-quality, consumer-centered care. Please contact me at 410.767.5806 or at cmilligan@dhmh.state.md.us if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Milligan".

Chuck Milligan
Deputy Secretary, Health Care Financing
March 9, 2012