



November 5, 2012

Secretary Joshua Sharfstein, M.D.
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 West Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Secretary Sharfstein:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Association of Core Service Agencies, I would like to thank you for the open, participatory process for selecting a financial model for Medicaid-funded behavioral health services. The Department's commitment to include stakeholder input in a meaningful way over the last nine months has been greatly appreciated, and resulted in a process informed by the diverse experience and perspectives of many.

MACSA, the private, non-profit organization comprised of the Directors of the 19 Core Service Agencies, agrees with the carefully considered recommendation to move forward with a risk-based ASO-managed carve-out to manage specialty behavioral health services. As the state-mandated local authorities responsible for planning, managing, and monitoring the Public Mental Health System, we provide oversight of local systems of care in our jurisdictions and promote and facilitate the engagement of behavioral health consumers in treatment and support services in the communities where they live. Given our role as partners with MHA and ValueOptions in managing the public mental health carve-out, we are well aware of the strengths and deficiencies of the current system, and believe that the recommended model will achieve your aim of more effective system management and integration of care.

We strongly agree with an incremental approach to change, recognizing this will best protect consumers of Medicaid-funded behavioral health services, and build on the strengths of the Public Mental Health System carve-out. We have been involved in previous system-wide redesign and are convinced of the value of careful step-by-step restructuring. At the same time, we appreciate your expectation that changes to the current system will be significant, impactful and measurable both in terms of improved care and improved cost management.

Our members are eager to engage in phase 3 of the integration planning process, and provide input into the important deliberations about how to best introduce performance risk in ways that will be significant and transformative. We are prepared to offer our collective experience and expertise to assist with the challenges of implementing the recommended model. We are pleased with your recognition and support of a continued strong role for local authorities, and look forward to partnering with DHMH in defining how local authorities can most effectively participate in the management of the new integrated behavioral health system.

We pledge that we will participate in the continued process to insure that our shared goal of a transformed and integrated system, where public funds can purchase high quality behavioral health care while controlling costs and strengthening outcomes, is met.

Sincerely,

Rick Rock
President, Maryland Association of Core Service Agencies

CC: dhmh.bhintegration@maryland.gov