



Vote

like your
mental health

depends on
it.

2024 Indiana Mental Health Voter Guide



Dear Fellow Hoosiers,

Over the past few years, Indiana has made significant strides in addressing the mental health needs of our residents. We have seen progress in expanding access to crisis services through the implementation of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and the growth of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) across the state. These initiatives represent critical steps toward ensuring that every Hoosier has access to the care they need in times of crisis.

However, we are only at the beginning of what must be a long-term, comprehensive effort to address the mental health challenges facing Indiana. Our work is far from done. The rates of youth mental health issues, increasing demand for services among older adults, and the mental health crisis affecting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities all indicate a need for continued focus and commitment.

We must also confront the shortage of behavioral health professionals, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Without a strong, well-supported workforce, many Hoosiers will continue to face barriers to accessing timely and effective care. Mental health parity—treating mental health and substance use with the same importance as physical health—is a critical issue we must continue to address. While we've made progress, much work remains to ensure every Hoosier has equal access to care, regardless of insurance or income.

Our Behavioral Health Commission Report highlights ongoing barriers like coverage limitations, provider shortages, and stigma. Achieving true parity is vital to the well-being of all Hoosiers, and it remains a central focus of our efforts moving forward.

As we move forward, it is vital that we remain united in our efforts to expand services, reduce stigma, and advocate for policies that prioritize mental health at every level of government. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive behavioral health system—one that ensures equitable access to care for all Hoosiers, no matter where they live or what challenges they face.

Your involvement is critical to this mission. Whether through voting, advocacy, or community engagement, your voice can help drive the change we need. I invite you to join us as we continue working toward a future where mental health is recognized, respected, and fully supported.

Sincerely,
Stephen McCaffrey
CEO, Mental Health America of Indiana

Zoe Frantz
President & CEO
Indiana Council





Indiana Voter Guide for Mental Health Advocacy 2024

- **Action Checklist**
- **Understanding the 2024 Commission Report**
- **Questions for Candidates**
- **Template Letter to Candidates**
- **Useful Links**

Are You Registered to Vote?

Check your status: www.vote.org/am-i-registered-to-vote/

Action Checklist



What You Should Do to Become an Advocate:

Register to vote:

In 2022, 68.3% of Indiana's voting-age citizens were registered to vote. If you're among the 31.7% who are not registered, have moved since the last election, or are unsure of your registration status, you can use the links below to register or check your status. If you're already registered and have confirmed your status, consider encouraging five other people to register!

Useful Links for Indiana Voters:

- Check your voter registration status: [Indiana Voter Portal](#)
- Register to vote: [Indiana Voter Registration](#)

By taking these steps, you can ensure your voice is heard in future elections!

Read the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission (IBHC) Report:

Hoosiers, the 2024 Indiana Behavioral Health Commission Report is now available. This report addresses key areas such as crisis services, youth mental health, and workforce shortages. By reading this report, you can stay informed about the progress being made and what still needs to be done to improve mental health care for all Hoosiers.

Action Checklist



Sign Up For Mental Health America of Indiana's Advocacy Alerts:

Mental Health America of Indiana is in the Statehouse every day during the Indiana Legislative session, advocating tirelessly for Hoosiers living with mental health conditions. Stay informed and engaged by signing up for our advocacy alerts and updates! We send weekly legislative updates on behavioral health bills so you can follow important developments and make your voice heard when it matters most. Together, we can shape a better future for mental health in Indiana.

Sign up now and be part of the movement!

Follow Us on Social Media:

Don't miss out on opportunities to engage, learn, and take action as we advocate for better mental health services across the state. Join the conversation and be part of the change!

Follow us now for real-time updates:

- Instagram: [@mentalhealthindiana](#)
- X (formerly Twitter): [@mhaindiana](#)
- Facebook: [MHA of Indiana](#)
- [LinkedIn - Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers](#)
- [X - Indiana Council](#)
- [Facebook - Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers](#)



Understanding the Report

Part I: Foundations – Infrastructure and Reimbursement

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Indiana has made significant progress in implementing the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, but gaps in coverage remain, particularly in rural areas. The Commission stresses the need for continued funding and infrastructure development to ensure that all Hoosiers, regardless of location, can access timely crisis intervention. Integrating 988 services with community behavioral health clinics and other local services is essential to providing comprehensive crisis care.

Key Recommendations:

- **Expand Coverage:** The Commission recommends continuing to invest in and expand the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to cover all Indiana counties. As of July 2024, 79 of 92 counties are covered by Mobile Crisis Teams (MCTs), with plans for full coverage by 2025.
- **Sustain Funding:** Indiana must continue supporting the infrastructure and funding for the 988 Crisis System, with estimated costs around \$100 million for FY 2026 and \$120 million for FY 2027.
- **Integrate Crisis and CCBHC Services:** The 988 Lifeline and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) systems should be integrated to create a seamless behavioral health crisis response system.





Understanding the Report

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Model

The CCBHC model provides comprehensive behavioral health services, including mental health, substance use treatment, and primary care integration. While Indiana has made strides in expanding CCBHCs, the report highlights the need for further growth, especially in underserved regions. Funding and reimbursement models must be aligned with the cost of providing services to ensure sustainability.


Key Recommendations:

- **Statewide Expansion:** The Commission recommends expanding the CCBHC model to cover 100% of Indiana by 2027. Currently, the model serves 40% of the state.
- **Sustain Financial Support:** Continued funding for CCBHCs is critical, including sustaining the federal Medicaid Demonstration Program. The estimated additional state funding needed is \$50 million in FY 2026 and \$70 million in FY 2027.
- **Outcome-Based Evaluation:** The Commission suggests rigorous outcome measurement for CCBHCs to track their impact on behavioral health and financial sustainability.

Reimbursement and Parity

Mental health parity ensures that mental health services are reimbursed on par with physical health services. The Commission identifies significant challenges with enforcing parity laws in Indiana, leading to gaps in access and care, particularly for low-income individuals. Addressing these gaps is essential for improving mental health outcomes across the state.

Key Recommendations:

- **Ensure Mental Health Parity:** The Commission recommends enforcing mental health parity laws to ensure that mental health services are reimbursed at the same rate as physical health services. This includes indexing mental health reimbursement to Medicare rates.
 - **Increase Reimbursement Rates:** Indiana should raise reimbursement rates for mental health services to ensure sustainability and compliance with parity laws.
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Understanding the Report

Part II: People – Building the Workforce Workforce Development

Indiana is facing a critical shortage of mental health professionals, particularly in rural areas. The report highlights the urgent need to expand training programs and increase the use of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and other specialized providers. To attract and retain professionals, the Commission recommends offering financial incentives and addressing burnout and retention issues that have worsened due to the pandemic.

Key Recommendations:

- **Address Workforce Shortages:** Indiana faces a critical shortage of mental health professionals, especially in rural areas. The Commission recommends increasing residency positions for psychiatry and exploring loan forgiveness programs for mental health professionals.
- **Involve APRNs and Occupational Therapists:** Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and occupational therapists should play a more significant role in providing mental health services, and Indiana should remove restrictions that prevent APRNs from practicing independently.
- **Sustainable Funding for Programs:** Programs like Be Happy (youth mental health consultations) and CHAMP (healthcare provider consultations) should receive sustainable state funding.





Understanding the Report

Part III: Special Considerations

Youth and Adolescent Mental Health

Indiana is experiencing a significant increase in mental health challenges among children and adolescents, particularly those with high-acuity needs. The report emphasizes the lack of sufficient early intervention programs and resources in schools. Addressing these gaps requires expanding school-based mental health services and increasing the availability of inpatient psychiatric care for youth.

Key Recommendations:

- **Improve Youth Mental Health Services:** Indiana must invest in early intervention programs, school-based mental health services, and community-based mental health resources for high-acuity youth.
- **Expand Residential Care:** The Commission recommends increasing the availability of residential and inpatient mental health services for children and adolescents with severe mental health needs.

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

Individuals with IDD often struggle to access appropriate mental health services. The report notes that many people with IDD face barriers due to the lack of dual-diagnosis programs that address both mental health and developmental challenges. The Commission recommends creating streamlined care pathways to ensure these individuals receive comprehensive care.

Key Recommendations:

- **Expand Dual-Diagnosis Programs:** Indiana should create dual-diagnosis care pathways to better serve individuals with both mental health issues and intellectual or developmental disabilities.



Understanding the Report

Older Adults

Older Hoosiers often experience mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, yet they face unique barriers to accessing care. The Commission identifies a lack of age-appropriate mental health services and inadequate integration of behavioral health into primary care settings as key issues.

Key Recommendations:

- **Improve Access to Services for Older Adults:** The Commission recommends creating more integrated behavioral health and medical care facilities for older adults and supporting age-friendly health systems.

Crisis Services and Jail Diversion

Indiana is working to reduce the number of individuals with mental health conditions who are incarcerated by expanding crisis intervention services and jail diversion programs. These initiatives ensure that individuals in crisis receive treatment rather than being funneled into the criminal justice system. However, the report notes that more needs to be done to ensure these programs are available statewide.

Key Recommendations:

- **Expand Jail Diversion Programs:** Indiana should continue to invest in jail diversion programs that direct individuals with mental health conditions away from incarceration and into treatment programs. This includes expanding mental health courts and crisis intervention services.





Understanding the Report

Part IV: Financial Sustainability

Securing long-term funding for behavioral health services is critical for sustaining improvements in Indiana's mental health system. The Commission emphasizes the need for creative funding solutions that ensure mental health services remain viable, particularly as demand for services grows.

Recommendations include exploring new funding streams, ensuring services are properly reimbursed, and advocating for increased state investment.

Key Recommendations:

- **Continue State Investments:** The Commission calls for continued state investment in behavioral health services, estimating that \$100 million to \$120 million in additional funding will be needed over the next few years to sustain 988 and CCBHC services.
- **Explore Additional Funding Sources:** The Commission suggests exploring creative funding mechanisms to support the long-term sustainability of behavioral health services, including Medicaid funding and federal grants.





Ask the Candidates!

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Expansion of Coverage: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission recommends expanding the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to all counties by 2025. As of now, only 79 out of 92 counties are covered by Mobile Crisis Teams.

Question: What steps will you take to ensure that every county in Indiana has full access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by 2025? How will you address the unique needs of rural areas that lack these critical services?

Funding for 988: The 988 system requires significant ongoing funding, with estimated costs of \$100 million for FY 2026 and \$120 million for FY 2027.

Question: How will you prioritize and secure the necessary funding to maintain and expand the 988 Lifeline across Indiana? Will you commit to making this a budget priority?

Integration of Services: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission recommends integrating 988 crisis services with Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) for a seamless response system.

Question: How will you facilitate the integration of the 988 Lifeline with CCBHC services to ensure individuals in crisis receive comprehensive care, from intervention to follow-up?

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)

Statewide Expansion: Currently, only 40% of Indiana is served by CCBHCs. The Commission aims for 100% coverage by 2027.


Question: What is your plan to support the statewide expansion of CCBHCs so that every Hoosier has access to comprehensive behavioral health services by 2027? How will you address service gaps in underserved areas?

Sustaining Financial Support: The state is projected to need an additional \$50 million by FY 2026 and \$70 million by FY 2027 to sustain CCBHCs.

Question: Given the projected funding needs for CCBHC expansion, how will you ensure the state allocates sufficient funds to maintain and grow these critical services? What strategies will you pursue to secure additional federal and state support?

Outcome-Based Evaluation: The Commission recommends rigorous evaluation of CCBHCs to track their effectiveness and financial sustainability.

Question: How will you ensure that CCBHCs are evaluated based on measurable outcomes to demonstrate their impact on behavioral health care? Will you support policies that link continued funding to these evaluations?





Ask the Candidates!

Reimbursement and Parity

Ensuring Parity: Mental health parity laws require that mental health services are reimbursed at rates comparable to physical health services, but enforcement remains a challenge.

Question: What specific steps will you take to enforce mental health parity laws in Indiana to ensure mental health services are reimbursed at equitable rates?

Increasing Reimbursement Rates: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission calls for raising reimbursement rates for mental health services to meet parity standards.

Question: How will you advocate for increasing mental health reimbursement rates to align with those for physical health services, especially in a time of workforce shortages?

Workforce Development

Addressing Workforce Shortages: Indiana faces critical shortages of mental health professionals, particularly in rural areas.


Question: What plans do you have to address the shortage of mental health professionals in Indiana? Will you support programs such as loan forgiveness or residency expansion to attract and retain professionals in underserved areas?

Involving APRNs and Occupational Therapists: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission recommends expanding the role of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and occupational therapists in delivering mental health care.

Question: How will you support the involvement of APRNs and occupational therapists in providing mental health services? Do you favor removing restrictions that limit APRNs' ability to practice independently?

Sustainable Funding for Key Programs: Programs like Be Happy (youth consultations) and CHAMP (healthcare provider consultations) need sustainable state funding.

Question: Will you commit to securing ongoing funding for successful mental health programs like Be Happy and CHAMP? How will you ensure these programs have the resources to expand and serve more Hoosiers?





Ask the Candidates!

Special Population Mental Health

Children and Adolescents

Improving Youth Mental Health Services: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission highlights the need for increased investment in early intervention, school-based mental health services, and community resources.

Question: How will you ensure that Indiana schools are equipped to provide comprehensive mental health services, including early intervention for high-acuity students? Will you support increased funding for school-based mental health programs?

Expanding Residential Care for Youth: There is a shortage of residential and inpatient care options for children and adolescents with severe mental health needs.

Question: What steps will you take to increase the availability of residential and inpatient mental health services for children and adolescents in Indiana?

Older Adults

Improving Access for Older Adults: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission recommends creating more integrated behavioral health and medical services for older adults.

Question: How will you support the development of age-friendly mental health services that are integrated with primary care for older adults?

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

Expanding Dual-Diagnosis Programs: Many individuals with IDD lack access to appropriate mental health care due to the absence of dual-diagnosis programs.

Question: How will you expand access to dual-diagnosis programs that address both mental health needs and developmental disabilities for Indiana's IDD population?

Serious Mental Illness


Long-Term Support for SMI: Individuals with serious mental illness often require long-term, continuous support to manage their conditions. FSSA Should create – and the General Assembly should fund a group home room and board rate for all SMI group homes to meet the needs of current beds and ensure no additional beds would close.

Question: How will you advocate for long-term care solutions, including housing and supported employment, for Hoosiers with serious mental illness?

Expanding Crisis and Inpatient Services for SMI: The report highlights the need for more crisis intervention and inpatient services for those with serious mental illness.

Question: What is your plan to expand crisis and inpatient services for individuals with serious mental illness in Indiana?





Ask the Candidates!

Crisis Services and Jail Diversion

Expanding Jail Diversion Programs: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission recommends continuing to invest in programs that divert individuals with mental health conditions away from incarceration.

Question: What is your plan to expand jail diversion programs and mental health courts in Indiana, ensuring that individuals with mental health conditions receive treatment rather than incarceration?

Investing in Crisis Intervention: Indiana needs more investment in crisis intervention services to reduce incarcerations and ensure those in mental health crises get the help they need.

Question: How will you expand crisis intervention services across Indiana to reduce mental health-related incarcerations?

Financial Sustainability

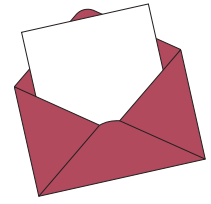
State Investments in Behavioral Health: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission estimates that Indiana will need an additional \$100 million to \$120 million over the next few years to sustain mental health services.

Question: How will you ensure the state invests in the long-term financial sustainability of mental health services? What are your plans for securing funding to sustain the 988 Lifeline and CCBHC programs?

Exploring Additional Funding Sources: The Indiana Behavioral Health Commission suggests creative funding solutions, such as leveraging Medicaid and federal grants.

Question: How will you explore and secure alternative funding sources, such as Medicaid and federal grants, to support Indiana's behavioral health system?

Letter Template



[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email Address]
[Date]

[Legislator's Name]
Indiana State House of Representatives
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Representative [Legislator's Name],

I am writing to express my strong support for the recommendations outlined in the 2024 Indiana Behavioral Health Commission (IBHC) report and to urge you to champion these essential changes. The report addresses crucial areas that require legislative attention, including the expansion of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which provides life-saving support for individuals in mental health crises. It also advocates for broadening access to Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) to ensure comprehensive care for underserved populations. Enforcing mental health parity is another key recommendation, ensuring that mental health services are treated with the same importance as physical health care, eliminating barriers to access. Furthermore, the report highlights the need for increased support for youth mental health services, particularly in schools, while also focusing on the unique needs of older adults and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Lastly, the report underscores the importance of addressing workforce shortages in the mental health field and the impact of social determinants on mental health outcomes. Your support of these recommendations will help ensure that all Hoosiers have access to the mental health services they need and deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this vital issue. I look forward to seeing Indiana take the necessary steps toward improving mental health care across the state.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Send an Email to Your Legislator Through [VoterVoice](#)

Helpful Links

Indiana Mental Health Advocacy Partners

- [Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction](#)
- [Indiana Primary Health Care Association \(IPHCA\)](#)
- [Indiana Psychological Association \(IPA\)](#)
- [Indiana Hospital Association \(IHA\)](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Indiana](#)
- [Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers \(ICCMHC\)](#)
- [Volunteers of America Ohio & Indiana](#)
- [Indiana Health Information Exchange \(IHIE\)](#)
- [United Way of Central Indiana](#)
- [Indiana Minority Health Coalition \(IMHC\)](#)
- [Faith in Indiana](#)
- [Overdose Lifeline](#)
- [The ARC](#)

Local and State Candidates

- [Indiana Secretary of State Elections Division](#)
- [Ballotpedia](#)

Enter your address to see a sample ballot with information on candidates running for local, state, and federal positions.

- [Vote Smart](#)

Enter your ZIP code to access detailed information about the candidates on your ballot.

Read Up on Health Policy

[Indiana Family and Social Services Administration \(FSSA\)](#)

Learn about health and mental health policies in Indiana, including Medicaid and addiction services.

[Indiana Behavioral Health Commission](#)

Follow the recommendations and reports from the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission to stay informed on health policy.

Feeling the Election Stress?

- **Mental Health Resources for Election Stress**
How to Cope with Election Stress (Crisis Text Line)
Tips and support for managing stress during elections.
- **Mental Health America - Screening Tools**
Take an MHA mental health screening and explore tips on how to cope with stress and difficult emotions.
- **Tough News: Caring for Your Mind**
Advice for caring for your mental health during stressful times.



www.mhai.net



www.indianacouncil.org

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info@mhai.net

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X/Twitter

[@mhaindiana](https://twitter.com/mhaindiana)