

# IMPACT REPORT 2017



LEAD, SUPPORT, STRENGTHEN, ADVOCATE



**Behavioral Health System**  
Baltimore



**Behavioral Health System**  
Baltimore

## **Our Vision**

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) envisions a city where people live and thrive in communities that promote and support behavioral health and wellness.

## **Our Mission**

BHSB's mission is to develop, implement, and align resources, programs, and policies that support the behavioral health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities.

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# Letter from BHSB President and CEO Crista M. Taylor

LETTER

We are proud to share our 2017 Impact Report highlighting aspects of our work to support emotional health and wellness for individuals, families, and communities in Baltimore City.

BHSB plays many roles, but I often come back to one: convener. Time and again, BHSB serves as a leader, bringing people, organizations, and systems together to strengthen the behavioral health system. We work closely with the city's service providers to support them in providing high-quality services. We coordinate citywide efforts to develop innovative approaches to improve care. And we create consensus among stakeholders to advance a common policy agenda that ensures behavioral health advocates speak to policymakers in a unified voice.

While we are proud of our progress, we recognize that much more needs to be done. Many people in Baltimore still do not receive the treatment they need. Too many people with mental illness and substance use disorder have unnecessary contact with the police. The surge in opioid overdose deaths continues to rip apart families and weaken our communities. Stigma persists. And health disparities make it clear that people of color in Baltimore are not being adequately served by our behavioral health system.

BHSB's success in promoting emotional health and wellness in our city depends on the partnerships we create. We often talk of integration — of treating the people of Baltimore holistically — addressing their mental, social and physical health needs. In order to address the whole needs of people, we cannot do our work alone. We must work together with many partners to remove systemic obstacles that make it difficult for people to get the care they need at the time they need it.

We are deeply grateful to the provider and system-level organizations that we work with and the grass-roots community groups that do so much to improve the lives of Baltimoreans. We also offer our thanks to our funders and our key government partners.

At BHSB, we remain committed to our mission and values, and we will continue to find smart, cost-effective solutions to improve the health of our city.

Sincerely,

**CRISTA M. TAYLOR**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM BALTIMORE

PHOTO: *Doug Kapustin*



LETTER

# Behavioral Health System Baltimore

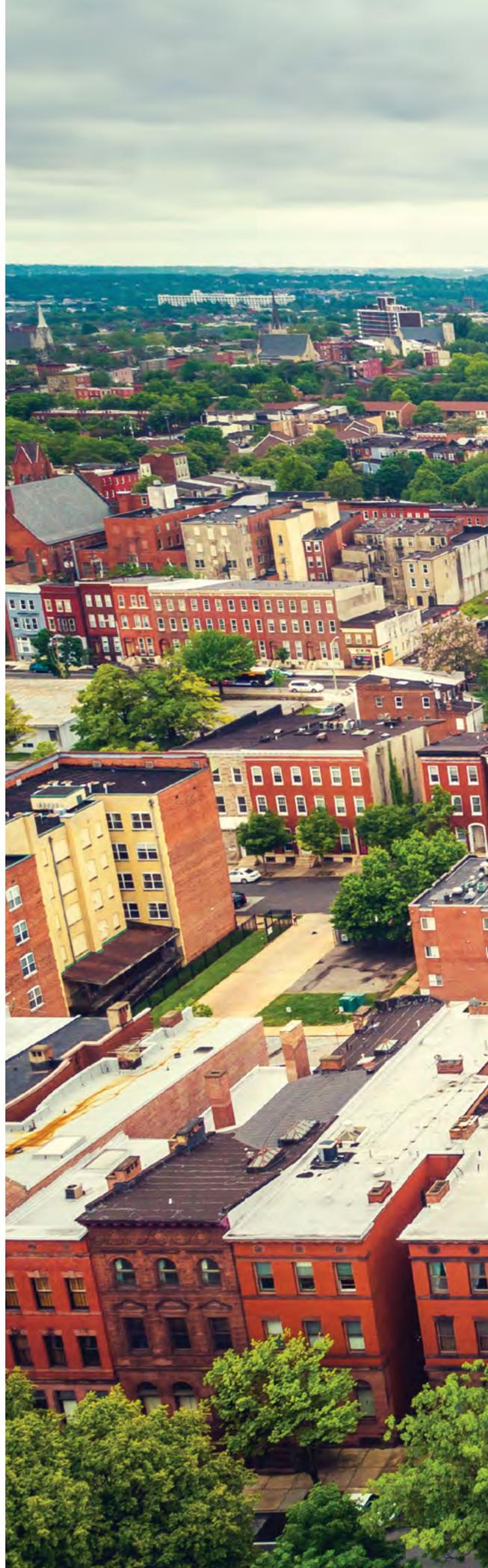
**B**ehavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a leading expert and resource in advancing behavioral health in Baltimore City and the State of Maryland. As a non-profit organization, BHSB is tasked by the City to oversee a full range of services to help individuals and families thrive in communities that promote emotional health and wellness.

Our goal is to help make Baltimore a healthier city by improving the system of care for individuals, families, and communities impacted by mental illness and substance use. We partner closely with many nonprofit organizations, health care providers, the community, the Maryland Department of Health, the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD), people with lived experience and their families and other advocates and system partners.

BHSB's work is an important public service to Baltimore City. We understand the challenges some Baltimoreans face in accessing behavioral health services. Issues, such as affordable housing or reliable transportation, to structural issues such as systemic racism and oppression of people of color, limit access to care. In a city where 28.8 percent of families are living in poverty, these barriers create real obstacles to accessing care.

We acknowledge that injustices that lead to inequities — such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ageism, ableism — are frequently structured into systems, institutions, and communities. We believe it is our responsibility to dismantle injustices and promote racial and social equity while working to develop a high quality, accessible system of care. ■

PHOTO: Shutterstock



An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in Baltimore, showing a mix of brick buildings, a church with a red roof and steeple, and a street with cars. A white text box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

*We understand the challenges some Baltimoreans face in accessing behavioral health services. Issues, such as lack of affordable, reliable transportation, or housing, to structural issues such systematic racism and oppression of people of color, limit access to care.*

**COLLABORATION**  
**LEAD**  
**RATION**

# Filling Service Gaps

**THE VIDEO WAS HARD TO WATCH.**

A woman with a mental illness, clad in just a hospital gown, was left outside a Baltimore hospital at a bus stop on a cold night in January. A passerby happened to see the woman and recorded what he saw — because otherwise he thought no one would believe the story.





LEAD

**LEFT AND ABOVE**

DETAILS FROM THE MARYLAND CRISIS STABILIZATION CENTER, A NEW FACILITY INTENDED TO FILL SOME OF THE GAPS IN THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SYSTEM IN BALTIMORE.

PHOTO: *Michael A. McCoy*

# Spotlight — Caring for People in Crisis

**A** young man was brought in suffering from alcohol withdrawal. He wanted help. Most people in his family had a substance use disorder, he told Angela Longe, a nurse practitioner and the interim program director of the Maryland Crisis Stabilization Center. The center is the first health facility in the state dedicated to helping actively-intoxicated people get sober in a safe, community-based setting. All people going through the center meet with a peer and get connected to the ongoing services they need to support their recovery. Longe referred the young man for treatment.

Soon thereafter, his mother was brought in also suffering from alcohol withdrawal. When she realized this was the same place where her son received help, she also requested assistance.

Longe was glad she could help both mother and

son. For her, the situation exemplified the city’s acute need for the stabilization center’s services.

Especially with the city’s opioid crisis “at its worst right now,” says Longe. “There are people out there that are dying every day.”

BHSB led the multi-stakeholder effort to establish the center in the city. It opened in April. As an alternative to emergency care, people are dropped off at the center by Baltimore City Fire Department’s Advanced Life Support (ALS) medic units. It’s a temporary respite where most people stay for 6 to 8 hours, sometimes longer if more time is needed to directly connect them to care. To ensure continuity in care, people are provided 30 days of case management after they leave.

“I’m making an impact out there,” says Longe. “That gives me the drive and the passion — knowing we can reach people and help them and make a difference in the greater good. Hopefully we can talk about the opioid crisis being in the past.” ■

“*I'm making an impact out there. That gives me the drive and the passion — knowing we can reach people and help them and make a difference in the greater good. Hopefully we can talk about the opioid crisis being in the past.*”

**ANGELA LONGE**

ANGELA LONGE IS A NURSE PRACTITIONER AND INTERIM PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT THE MARYLAND CRISIS STABILIZATION CENTER.



PHOTO: Michael A. McCoy

LEAD

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT

# Support a Quality Behavioral Health System — Connecting People to Services

BHSB supports a quality behavioral health system through care coordination for individuals who use a high level of services — specifically, those in need of intensive, wraparound services for serious and persistent behavioral health disorders.

As associate director of clinical services at BHSB, Celeste Boykins reviews every situation that comes across her desk. Often, people don't know where to turn for behavioral health services so we "provide a safe place to talk and not feel stigmatized," says Boykins. "We hold their hand and walk them through the process."

In September 2018, Boykins got a call from a mother who was desperately seeking help for her daughter and didn't know where to turn. She suspected her daughter was using substances and in need of mental health counseling. After much guidance and support from Boykins, the mother found a treatment center for her daughter and was able to get her connected to the program. Boykins also referred the mother to support groups for family members of someone struggling with a substance use disorder.

"Our success comes from how much we care," says Boykins. "The most rewarding aspect of this work is seeing people access the services they deserve. We give the community a voice and impact the disparities within the city. Every person we help knows BHSB puts diligence first."

The clinical services division at BHSB works with organizations across Baltimore including state and community hospitals, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and the Behavioral Health Administration, along with the judicial system, consumers, their families and providers throughout the city. ■



## Spotlight — Spreading Best Practices

SUPPORT

**U**nderstanding the relationship between traumatic events and substance use is a critical component in BHSB’s efforts to improve our behavioral health system and provide quality, holistic care.

As associate program director at the Institutes for Behavior Resources, Inc. (IBR), Joan Sperlein sees the effects of substance use disorders firsthand — and the widespread trauma they can cause. Through her work overseeing the clinical services at REACH (Recovery Enhanced by Access to Comprehensive Healthcare) Health Services, the clinical component of IBR, Sperlein often sees people who have experienced psychological trauma and have turned to drugs or alcohol to cope.

To create a more welcoming environment for patients, REACH staff participated in Baltimore City’s Trauma-Informed Care Training — created through a partnership between BHSB and the Baltimore City

Health Department — which teaches participants to implement a patient-centered and trauma-informed approach to addiction and recovery. Staff learned best practices such as eliminating stigmatizing language, encouraging a collaborative relationship between patients and staff, and adapting the office space to be more welcoming.

“We operate on the assumption that everyone who walks through our doors has experienced trauma, and that trauma now guides their day-to-day actions,” says Sperlein. “The training taught us to put the patient above everything else, everywhere, every day.”

Sperlein values the relationship IBR has with BHSB saying, “It’s collaborative in that we work together to enhance treatment for the residents of Baltimore City to assure they get quality health care for their substance use disorders.” ■

**RIGHT**

JOAN SPERLEIN, ASSOCIATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT THE INSTITUTES FOR BEHAVIOR RESOURCES, INC.

PHOTO: *Theresa Keil*



SUPPORT

**GO  
COMMUN  
ITIES  
STRENGTHEN  
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1 018

GO SLOW

  
**BMORE  
POWER**  
PEERS OFFERING  
WELLNESS, EDUCATION & RESOURCES

  
**BMORE  
POWER**

# Empowering Individuals and Communities

**W**ith the opioid crisis continuing to plague Baltimore City and other places across the country, communities are looking for innovative ways to prevent overdoses and improve access to treatment and recovery supports. To build stronger neighborhoods to respond to this crisis, BHSB supports Bmore POWER (Peers Offering Wellness Education and Resources), a network of people with lived experience related to drug use.

Bmore POWER is taking a bold approach to fighting the opioid epidemic — offering harm reduction resources and overdose prevention education. Members regularly set up training tables in neighborhoods with high rates of opioid overdoses to distribute overdose rescue kits and educate people about how to use them. Each kit includes two doses of naloxone nasal spray, a rescue breathing face shield, rubber gloves and alcohol wipes.

“Bmore POWER gives people hope and a sense of belonging which helps them get into and stay in recovery,” says Darryl Burrell, Coordinator for Bmore POWER. “Everyone here had a substance use disorder — that’s why the community trusts us. We’ve been there and came out on the other side.”

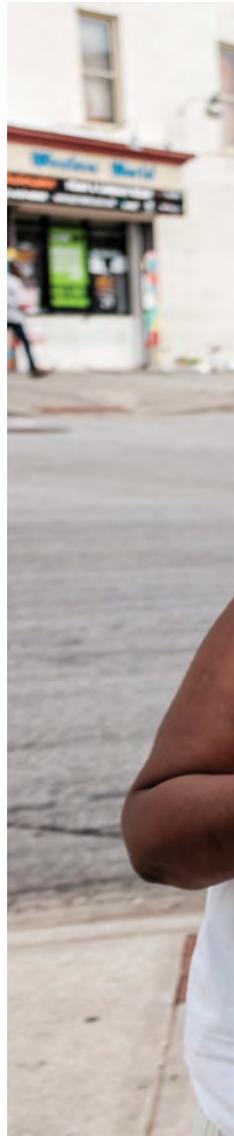
At Bmore POWER, members play a vital role in helping people with a substance use disorder make the journey to recovery. By learning from peers who are also in recovery, people can gain authentic guidance to move through challenging times and get the help they need.

Not everyone with a substance use disorder is interested in recovery. And even for those who are, the journey to recovery is a tough one. That’s why we need harm reduction approaches. They recognize that high-risk behavior may continue. They provide a way for people living with addiction to connect with a range of services and help reduce the stigma associated with substance use and treatment.

In addition to direct outreach in Baltimore neighborhoods, Bmore POWER offers a ten-week Harm Reduction Advocacy course to train peers on how to best provide education and resources to others.

“We’re strengthening communities and saving lives. It’s that simple,” says Burrell. ■

STRENGTHEN



## RIGHT TOP

BMORE POWER MEMBER (IN ORANGE SHIRT) TALKING WITH A COMMUNITY MEMBER OUTSIDE UPTON STATION IN WEST BALTIMORE.

## RIGHT BOTTOM

A BMORE POWER MEMBER SHOWING A NARCAN KIT TO A COMMUNITY MEMBER.

PHOTO: *Michael A. McCoy*



STRENGTHEN



*“Bmore POWER gives people hope and a sense of belonging which helps them get into and stay in recovery.”*

DARRYL BURRELL



PHOTO: Michael A. McCoy

# Spotlight — Strengthen Communities

PHOTOS: Michael A. McCoy

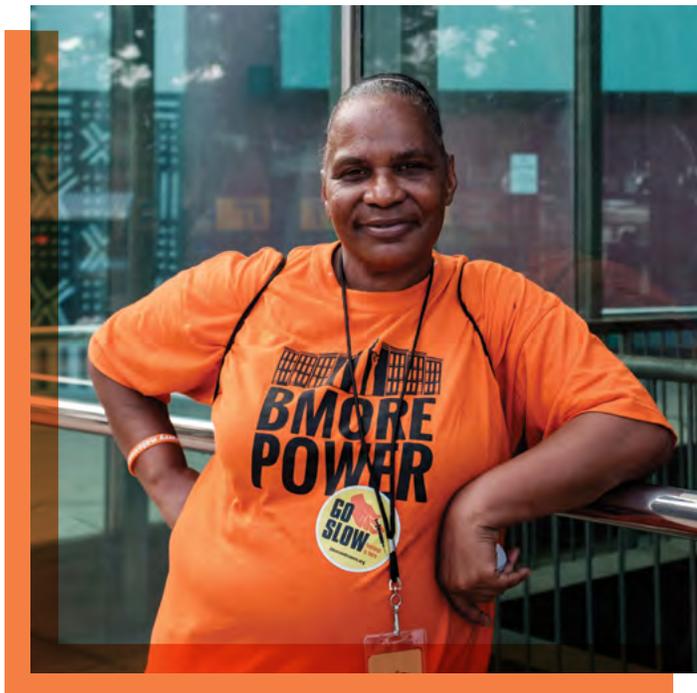
## Ricky Morris

“Being part of Bmore POWER has been great for me to get personal growth and understand how to help people. It enhances my own self-worth and helps me believe in myself because I know I am doing a good thing. It means that my brother’s death wasn’t in vain. He died from an overdose and this is therapeutic for me. My brother’s name will live on from me saving another life.”



## Jacqueline Conley

“Bmore POWER saves the community. We know you can’t tell someone to stop getting high, people have to make their own minds up. We’re saying be clean and be safe. If someone overdoses we’re there to give them the medicine to save their life. We know you’re going to do what you’re going to do but we want you to do it carefully and safely so you live to see tomorrow.”



STRENGTHEN

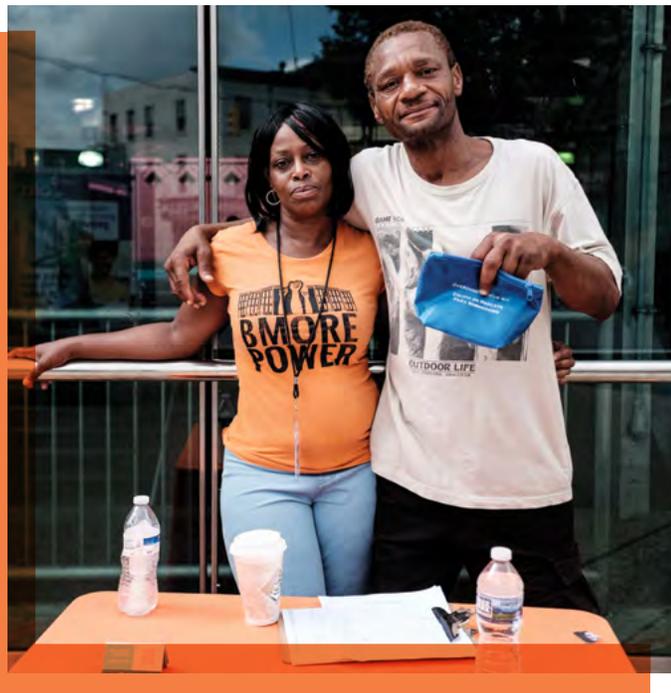
## Aric Johnson

“Being a part of Bmore POWER gives me the chance to help people. It’s so gratifying. Bmore POWER educates the community on what is going on around them. Things are becoming the norm that shouldn’t be. We bring education and resources and meet people where they’re at.”



## Shelly Johnson (with a friend)

“Being part of Bmore POWER for me has been the cornerstone of my own recovery. It keeps me grounded and makes me realize how grateful I am not to be out there. It keeps me grateful.”



## Darryl Burrell

“We go to the community and offer narcan trainings. We offer drug treatment. We also established relationships with the faith-based community throughout the Baltimore metropolitan area. We also help to put together the Go Slow campaign. I can go on for days about the work that Bmore POWER does. Every day we come up with ways to help the citizens of Baltimore.”



## Douglas Fuller

“Connecting with the people in Bmore POWER helped me to find community and purpose and recognize my value as a human. Regardless of the struggles I may be going through, I can help other people up who have fallen through the cracks, who may not realize they are worthy, that they have gifts to give. I have come to understand harm reduction work as a practice of Radical Love, by accepting and caring for people society has stigmatized and discarded we help to create a world where all people have access to the necessities for a healthy life and where EVERYONE has dignity and respect.”





STRENGTHEN

# STRONGER POLICIES ADVOCATE

# Advocate for Stronger Policies — Shaping Behavioral Health Policies

**BHSB continues to expand its role shaping policy at both the local and state levels — serving as a leader in developing consensus about shared policy goals.**

In 2017, BHSB took a deliberate approach to hear from people and organizations about policy changes that could strengthen the public behavioral health system in Maryland and Baltimore City. We began with meetings and listening sessions to hear from providers, partner organizations and members of the public, including many with lived experience with mental illness and substance use. There were informal discussions with others in the behavioral health community, followed up by an online survey to gather more feedback about policy challenges.

BHSB used the information to develop a set of policy priorities for the General Assembly session in Annapolis. Key goals included securing promised increases in reimbursement rates for behavioral health services and new funding for critically needed crisis services.

In Annapolis, BHSB worked closely with the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition and other advocates to secure the increase in reimbursement rates for behavioral health services. BHSB also worked to secure new funding for a youth violence intervention and prevention program and for expanded behavioral health crisis services, meeting with legislators and bringing in witnesses, including young people, to provide testimony about the need for more state resources in the city.

“I see BHSB becoming a true leader, particularly in explaining how legislation affects local providers, communities and the entire behavioral health system,” says Stacey Jefferson, associate director, policy and community engagement at BHSB. “Our role is growing, and I think we’re continuing to emerge as a leader in Annapolis. More and more people are starting to look to us for our expertise based on the work we do in Baltimore City.” ■

# Behavioral Health Advocates

## Stacey Jefferson

Stacey Jefferson, associate director, policy and community engagement at Behavioral Health System Baltimore.

“As a member of the policy team, my role is to both advocate myself but also do trainings for others who are interested in learning how to do advocacy. It’s not just about the politics. People make laws that affect us every day. It’s important for the people being affected by the laws to have influence.”



PHOTO: Theresa Keil



PHOTO: Theresa Keil

## Dan Martin

Dan Martin, the senior director of public policy for the Mental Health Association of Maryland, is especially proud of the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition's work on the Keep the Door Open campaign, which aims to improve access to high quality and accessible behavioral health services for all people in Maryland.

“Whether you're living with a behavioral health disorder yourself or you know someone who is, these issues impact us all. There has been a stigma surrounding mental health and substance use for far too long, but every year more and more people are getting involved, speaking up and demanding that their policymakers take action to address the need. Progress is incremental, but I am confident that continued hard work and the tireless dedication of a whole community of advocates and stakeholders will ultimately lead to a system where every Marylander with a behavioral health disorder has access to the services that meet their needs.”

## Jamaad Johnson

Jamaad Johnson, a 21-year-old youth activist, testified in Annapolis during the last legislative session in support of the Violence Intervention and Prevention Program bill; he shared his story struggling with mental illness stemming from a difficult childhood. Jamaad has found hope and support at Youth Empowered Society.

“I believe my testimony did impact that decision of the bill passing. I was the only youth there to represent that voice. In the morning I practiced what I would say. I practiced a little bit. But when I went to speak all of that flew out the window. I just told people my life story. For me to show up when no one else could and swallow my emotions and really get my point across the best and most professional way I could, I made it better.”



PHOTO: Theresa Keil



PHOTO: Shutterstock

# Financial Summary

## Consolidated Statement of Activities For Year Ended June 30, 2017

### REVENUE, GRANTS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Grants	60,072,993
Rental Income	1,949,711
Management and social service fees	96,728
Interest income	8,159
Mischellaneous	10,816
<b>Total Revenue, Grants, and Other Support</b>	<b>62,138,407</b>

### EXPENSES

Program services	56,901,813
Management and general	5,481,041
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>62,382,854</b>

# Board, Executive Team and Partners

## Board Members

Mary Beth Haller, Esq., Chair  
 Rev. S. Todd Yeary, PhD, Vice Chair  
 Nancy Rosen-Cohen, PhD, Secretary  
 Jessica R. Contreras, MSW, LCSW  
 Judge Ellen M. Heller  
 David H. Jernigan, PhD  
 Kevin Lindamood, MSW  
 Ryan Hemminger  
 Frederick G. Savage, Esq.  
 Steve Sharfstein, MD, MPA  
 Councilman John Bullock  
 Alan C. Woods III, Esq.  
 Tony A. Wright  
 Steven Sharfstein, MD, MPA

## Executive Team

Crista M. Taylor, L.C.S.W.-C. President and CEO  
 Steve Johnson, L.C.P.C Vice President, Programs  
 Adrienne Breidenstine, M.S.W. Vice President, Policy and Communications  
 Lynn Mumma, M.S.W. Vice President, Strategy  
 Arnold Ross, M.B.A. Vice President, Finance and Operations  
 Denise Wheatly-Rowe, M.S.W., Vice President, Accountability  
 Ayelet Gincel, Director, Human Resources

## Partners

BHSB works closely with a range of Baltimore City and Maryland state agencies, especially the Baltimore City Health Department and the Maryland Department of Health.

BHSB also is proud to partner with other state and city agencies and nonprofit organizations, including:

Maryland Department of Human Services  
 Maryland Department of Juvenile Services  
 Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services  
 Baltimore City District and Circuit Courts  
 Baltimore Fire Department  
 Baltimore Police Department  
 Baltimore City Public Schools  
 Baltimore City Department of Social Services  
 Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate  
 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice  
 Mayor's Office of Human Services  
 Black Mental Health Alliance  
 Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland  
 Maryland Alliance for the Poor Coalition  
 Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence  
 Maryland Association of Behavioral Health Authorities  
 Maryland Hospital Association  
 Mental Health Association of Maryland  
 National Alliance of Mental Illness—Maryland  
 National Alliance on Mental Illness—Metro Baltimore



**Behavioral Health System**  
Baltimore

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