



## Cumberland County Board of Commissioners

Gary Eichelberger, Chairman . Jean Foschi, Vice Chairman . Vincent T. DiFilippo, Secretary

### Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **“Who Will Help if the County Doesn’t Get Sustainable Funding?” Residents’ Message to Lawmakers as County Wraps Up 4<sup>th</sup> Mental Health Town Hall**

*“Cumberland County Commissioners sign resolution calling for increased funding for mental health services.”*

**Carlisle, PA** – Residents, advocates, mental health professionals, survivors and family members fought back tears as they told their stories of how they, or their children, are suffering from mental health issues.

The Cumberland-Perry Mental Health Office held four town hall meetings in Cumberland and Perry Counties to inform residents that the county is facing a \$2.5 million deficit for mental health services.

“Without adequately funding these services, many individuals with serious mental illness may find themselves in repeated cycles of hospitalization, homelessness, or possibly incarcerated,” said Cumberland-Perry Mental Health Administrator Annie Strite. “For the past 13 years, we have not had an increase in funding to serve our residents in the fastest growing county in the state.”

Members of the audience called on residents to contact lawmakers to discuss the mental health deficit, and how the risk of cutting programs would be detrimental to the individuals who are dealing with mental illness.

A Cumberland County mother told the audience that her son, a star athlete, played for the Boston Red Sox right out of high school, and then went on to play football for Penn State, until his first mental health crisis.

“My son received mental health services that wouldn’t have been possible without the county,” said Becky Parthemore, Cumberland County mother. “He now lives in a county-funded residential services and is learning how to manage his mental illness with the treatment he needs; but this could not have happened without the county.”

Insufficient state funding is putting Cumberland-Perry Mental Health Services in jeopardy, and accessing mental health services is crucial to our residents. While at a Perry County Town Hall meeting, a panelist detailed her experience with mental health issues.

“Mental Health funding is important because it funds case management, peer support, and psych rehab, all of which has helped me handle negative thoughts and get me through her my journey,” said Heather Goshorn, Perry County resident with lived experience.

Another Cumberland County resident spoke of his mental illness which began as a 15-year-old. As an author, RN, and Certified Peer Support Specialist, Louis Bianco shares his personal lived experience with others to bring change. However, his personal struggle with bi-polar disorder has not ended.

“The Mental Health Services that are in jeopardy are necessary for all of us, on either side of illness and health, as well as many in recovery,” said Bianco. “These services are of equal importance to those who remain on their journey, who are currently in crisis, and those who someday may be.”

Increased costs of mental health services and lack of sustainable funding may result in cuts to services for children and adults.

“The county has not seen an increase in mental health funding since 2008,” stated Dusty McMillan, Cumberland-Perry MH.IDD Advisory Board, and family member, “My son, who was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia at 19, and is now 48, uses many of the county services. If it weren’t for these services, I don’t know how he would have survived.”

Cumberland County Commissioners today signed a resolution calling for all residents to contact members of the General Assembly to increase the funding for mental health services in both counties.

*Editors’ Note:*

[\*\*View Resolution 2023-15\*\*](#)

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