



Overdose deaths continue to rise and depression in vulnerable populations remains untreated, leading to generations of despair. Substance use and mental illness in jails and prisons remains rampant and yet treatment is scarce. Gaps in care for persons affected by these disorders with co-occurring serious physical illnesses persist. Despite calls for action, emergency declarations, and increased allocation of resources, there is a dearth of funding available to provide treatment to the most vulnerable and a failure to prioritize flexible, low-threshold and high-quality models of care.

**The Behavioral Health Leadership Institute [BHLI] remains committed to changing this bleak paradigm as we move into our 20<sup>th</sup> year. Through your donations, grants from foundations, and funds raised at the past three BHLI Fundraisers, BHLI has been able to make amazing progress in several key areas during the past few years.**

**EXPANDED SERVICES:** We remain committed to our mission to remove gaps in services to the most vulnerable populations and, despite Covid we have maintained our values and greatly expanded our services. Also, during the past few months, we have increased our accessibility to those with recent incarcerations due to a very strong partnership with the jail/detention center, which has expanded in depth and commitment over the past 18 months. We are now poised to accept direct transitions with a warm hand-off, and we have several staff, including a case manager and peer outreach workers, building relationships inside the jail and meeting inmates at the beginning of the process. Additionally, we are in a unique partnership with Corizon, the health provider at the jail, to work together on training corrections staff and transitioning patients.

**COVID:** At the same time, we have pivoted during Covid to be on Zoom, as needed, with a full team and unique phone system which is more accessible to our patients without phones. Each time Covid subsides a bit and the weather warms we immediately return to our outside services. Our team is expert at moving back and forth between the Zoom and providing services outside at the van so that we have never closed the program.

**ADVOCACY:** We continue our advocacy work around the current DEA rules that weaken the treatment system and are describing new issues related to a dearth of available medication. We are creating a dialogue with the Drug Enforcement Administration to work together on these issues.

**RESEARCH:** BHLI remains committed to services, clinical excellence and research to support our development and to spread the word. Our amazing research team continues to align our data with service needs which provides research we use to improve while also publishing articles to disseminate our findings. Over the past few years we have published several new research articles and written several Op-Eds published in the Baltimore Sun.

**LEADERSHIP:** Due in major part, to the BHLI experience and to our voice, there are major changes afoot in the behavioral health landscape in Baltimore. More providers are turning towards our model and increasing the focus on harm reduction treatment and providing accessible services.

**AND MORE:** We currently operate, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am – 3:30 pm, but with increased grants and fundraising, we are planning to expand our van hours to meet the increased needs of our population including the jail. We also plan to establish new partnerships at sites including having a team at Charm City Care Connections to reach out to persons who continue to use drugs but may have an interest in trying medication treatment, to expand to a new West Baltimore home in partnership with an area Church and to increase training and educational activities thus promoting access and decreasing stigma.

**We invite you to share in this work with us. Your support is critical to improving treatment, saving and improving lives and shifting the paradigm to increase access and recovery for the most marginalized populations. Together we will succeed.**

**Watch this video: AJ+ visited the van during the summer of 2019. Though it is now several years old, it provides a terrific look at the services we offer. "Taking Opioid Treatment to a Baltimore Street," AJ+; September 18, 2019 <https://www.facebook.com/ajplusenglish/videos/2520625814834658/>**