

Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

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Name Robbyn Lewis

Office Delegate

District 46

Contact Robbyn Lewis

Phone 443-604-2984

Email robynlewisfordelagate@gmail.com

1. I support efforts to educate the public and providers about the need for acceptance of mental illness and substance use disorders as *health* conditions, first and foremost.
2. I support ongoing efforts to reduce overdose deaths and suicides using evidence-based public health approaches.
3. As a public health professional, I am committed to protecting and expanding health care for all. Health care is a human right. Children and youth deserve attention and support throughout their development, no matter what their health status. I am still learning about the field of mental health and substance use disorders, and so I would support ongoing efforts that are rooted in evidence-based, public health approaches, such as the collaborative care model.
4. Older adults also deserve support and services for mental health and substance use disorders. The collaborative care model is a worthy approach. Provider training and supports are also critical. Older adults also need to have access to safe, affordable housing. Health care coverage must also be protected, and I am working hard to ensure that as well.
5. I would work hard to increase coordination of care and funding for more trained providers.
6. I have worked professionally in the field of health insurance, specifically I spent over two years working at the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, the state agency that implement the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act (ACA). As such, I am a fierce defender of all ACA provisions, including essential health services like mental and behavioral health. I will continue to work hard to protect the ACA to ensure access to quality affordable health care for all.
7. I will support policy and legislative efforts that expand access to safe, stable and affordable housing for all, especially our most vulnerable people.
8. I am deeply concerned about our society's failure to care for its most vulnerable people, including individuals with behavioral health needs in our jails and prisons. During the 2018 session, I first learned about the crisis we face in providing essential health services to people who are in detention or incarcerated, and I find this situation absolutely unacceptable. When I learned that people held in pre-trial detention are not assured of access to health care,

specifically substance use disorder treatment, I committed myself to work to right this wrong – as well as all the other wrongs that are visited on people in detention or incarcerated. I am currently working with researchers and experts in the field of substance use disorders so that I can help develop solutions to this problem.

9. I will continue to support efforts to help meet the rising demand for mental health and substance use disorder services. My training and professional experience did not focus on these issues, nevertheless, I am dedicated to learning as much as I can and helping to address these problems.