

Governor Whitmer's Plan to Expand Access to Mental Health

Background

Governor Whitmer knows that mental health is just as important as physical health. In three years, the Whitmer-Gilchrist administration has increased access to physical, behavioral, and children's health services, funded fourteen community behavioral health clinics, and gave direct care workers a raise. But there is still so much work to do. One of the most significant barriers to mental health care in Michigan is access.

This year, the governor made progress on expanding mental health access for our kids. She made the largest education investment in Michigan history without raising taxes, something she has accomplished three years in a row. This investment included resources to help schools hire mental health professionals, and so far, they've hired 560 additional nurses, counselors, and social workers to care for our kids.

Putting Michiganders First

Ashley has struggled with mental health for as long as she can remember. She recently lost her mother, and her father has cancer, so she's going through a really hard time. She's looking to go back to therapy, but she's facing a waiting list of at least 5 months, and even when she does get in, she is worried about how she will afford her out of pocket expenses for therapy visits and specialist appointments with a psychiatrist. In addition to caring for her parents over the last year, she's now trying to navigate finding a provider. Ashley works as a billing specialist for a mental health agency, and even with her understanding of how to navigate the system, she is still struggling with how to find and pay for her necessary mental health care.

Plan

Governor Whitmer wants every person in Michigan to have access to the quality, affordable mental and physical care that they need.

She is calling for an expansion of the Michigan State Loan Repayment Program (MSLRP) program for behavioral health providers and increasing funding for mental health professionals in our schools. This expansion will help retain or recruit hundreds of mental health care providers to Michigan. Last year, Governor Whitmer also proposed [MI Healthy Communities](#), a \$1.4 billion proposal that would increase capacity for community-based behavioral health and substance use disorder treatments.

Opportunity

Governor Whitmer's proposals will help Michigan take a big step towards giving Michiganders the comprehensive care they need, and by making investments in the mental health workforce, we can attract and retain more mental health professionals, open up more appointments, and create good-paying jobs.