

Michigan's mental health sector could see a \$565M boost

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Inside the Jay and Betty Van Andel Center on the campus of Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services in Cutlerville on Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2019. (Cory Morse | MLive.com) Cory Morse | MLive.com Cory Morse | MLive.com

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By [Jordyn Hermani | jhermani@mlive.com](mailto:jhermani@mlive.com)

Michigan's mental health system is poised to receive the largest infusion of funding its seen in decades after the state Senate overwhelmingly gave the OK to an appropriations bill totaling more than \$560 million.

Passing in a 36-1 vote on Wednesday was [SB 714](#), sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey, R-Clarklake, which would earmark \$565.5 million in mostly federal funding to help reform the state's mental health systems.

“Our state's mental health system is failing patients, their families, health care providers, and taxpayers,” Shirkey said in a statement following the vote.

“Everyone in our state should have access to quality mental health services regardless of their means or where they live. Today, we've taken a critical step toward making sure they do.”

The predominance of that money, \$548.7 million, will come from Michigan's Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund established through the American Rescue Plan Act. The rest is sourced from the state's general fund and the overall dollar amount will be split between the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Among the items funded are \$100 million worth of infrastructure grants for pediatric inpatient services, \$50 million for community mental health services integration readiness, \$35 million for the expansion of mental health services and \$25 million for the clinical integration fund.

There is also an additional \$25 million earmarked for crisis stabilization units, \$25 million for Michigan essential health provider loan repayments, \$25 million

for psychiatric residential treatment facilities and another \$25 million for state psychiatric hospital capital outlay. All of this funding would be directed toward the DHHS for use.

Meanwhile LEO would receive roughly \$31 million in funding from the state fiscal recovery fund, with the bulk (\$30 million) going to support a career path apprenticeship program. The remaining money would then go toward an enhancement grant for the McLaren Greenlawn Hospital in Lansing for a behavioral health pilot project.

There are, however, some stipulations involved – namely that a chunk of this fund shift could only occur if two bills in the Senate, SB 597 and SB 598, are signed into law. Those pieces of legislation seek to integrate both physical and mental health services and are each sponsored by Shirkey.

They have been opposed by several community mental health organizations for myriad reasons, including the belief that changes proposed under the bills would create further hardships to accessing care while not ensuring enough oversight or accountability.

One of the pots of funding affected in SB 714 would be \$15 million slated toward Medicaid mental health services. Other projects impacted includes \$25 million in grant funding for facilities and providers that integrate their setting with physical and behavioral health services and providers, as well as \$15 million in funding for the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network to implement a centrally located integrated service center to provide both physical and mental health services.

It would also impact \$10 million in funding for the Jail Diversion Fund to dole out grants to local entities to establish or expand jail diversion programs; half of those grants would go to community-based mobile crisis intervention services while the other would go to pre-arrest or post-arrest diversion programs for individuals with behavioral health needs.

In total some estimate the appropriation could be shortened by more than \$100 million should it pass without the passage of Shirkey's other bills. Yet some mental health groups believe that even if that funding does fall through, the Legislature would find a way to still reach those areas of interest.

Bobby Dorigo Jones, vice president of the group Michigan's Children, said he had a "hard time believing that some version of funds are not going to pass before the end of this session" should SB 714 pass without the other two Senate bills first being signed into law

"The lack of investment in our mental health system – whether it's access or professionals – is the number one reason why people in the state are not able to access the mental health care they need. ... I have to

believe that by the end of this legislative session there's going to be some mental health increased spending," he said.

The bill now moves over to the House for further consideration.

