

# MassHealth: The Linchpin of the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Care System



MassHealth plays a central role in delivering behavioral health care services to low-income and other Massachusetts residents at high risk of behavioral health conditions. At the same time, the program drives needed reforms to the behavioral health delivery system used by all residents of the Commonwealth.

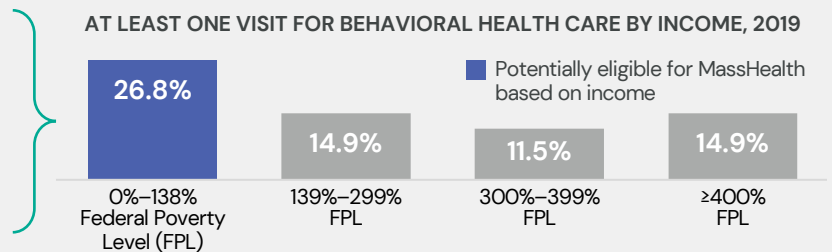
## MASSHEALTH IMPROVES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS AND OUTCOMES FOR MEMBERS

### Covers individuals at higher risk for behavioral health conditions.

- Low-income individuals may be at **increased risk of behavioral health conditions**, including mental health and substance use disorders. Research suggests that a range of socioeconomic factors, such as housing stability and food security, contribute to this finding.
- MassHealth covered nearly **half of all behavioral health expenditures** in Massachusetts in 2013.

### Improves access to behavioral health services.

- Individuals who are potentially eligible for MassHealth based on their income report having less unmet need and have a **greater likelihood of having at least one behavioral treatment** visit than those at marginally higher incomes.



### Provides robust coverage.

- MassHealth covers **all major types of behavioral health services**.
- Behavioral health benefits are **more robust than those in many commercial plans**.

### Improves behavioral health outcomes.

- Evidence suggests that Medicaid **improves behavioral health outcomes** (including lower rates of opioid overdose deaths) and **other life outcomes** (including employment).

## MASSHEALTH IS THE LINCHPIN OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S BROADER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM

### Supports Massachusetts' behavioral health workforce.

- Nonprofit and public behavioral health providers often struggle to break even and are **heavily dependent on Medicaid revenue to cover operating expenses**.
- MassHealth is a vehicle for **\$115 million in federal and state dollars for "statewide investments"** designed to improve delivery system capacity, with a focus on workforce.

### Develops successful behavioral health reforms that can be expanded beyond MassHealth.

- Policymakers have leveraged MassHealth's position as the largest payer of behavioral health services to **drive improvements in care delivery for individuals across Massachusetts**.
- Recent legislation requires commercial plans to **align with the more comprehensive features of MassHealth behavioral health coverage**.



For more information on MassHealth: The Linchpin of the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Care System, see the full issue brief at [https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/sites/g/files/csphws2101/files/2021-06/MH\\_Impact\\_BH\\_brief\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/sites/g/files/csphws2101/files/2021-06/MH_Impact_BH_brief_FINAL.pdf).