



# 2017 Annual Report

## Connecting, Supporting and Empowering Families

Dear Friends,

*A sigh of relief.* That is what families all over our state experienced last year when they connected with Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF). Families felt relief when met with compassion and respect by someone who understood what they were going through, because they had faced similar struggles in finding help for their own child’s mental health and/or substance use challenges.

That personal connection—to our work and the challenges our families overcome—is what makes MCF special. It’s what drives our work connecting, supporting and empowering Maryland’s families.

During Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017), MCF built on our 18-year history of supporting families of young people with behavioral health needs: we expanded our geographic reach, providing one-to-one family peer support in all 24 Maryland jurisdictions; and launched a program to intentionally support parents and caregivers of young people with substance use challenges.

Our leadership training programs continued to create more empowered parents and caregivers, and our local support groups, trainings and family activities promoted connection among families. Families also came together to raise awareness of critical issues and ensure their voices and perspectives were heard by legislators and decision makers.

Thank you to our Board of Directors, staff, funders and community partners. Your ongoing support truly makes a difference in the lives of so many Maryland families. With your continued partnership, we look forward to expanding support for families in 2018.

Jane Plapinger  
Executive Director

Karen Sandler  
Board President

### 2017 at a Glance

**1,333**

families of young people with behavioral health needs, including mental health and substance use challenges, received one-to-one peer support

**160**

family members and advocates made their voice heard at MCF’s 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Day in Annapolis

**98**

parents, caregivers and young people connected with peers and built skills through a leadership retreat or institute

**30,822**

individuals connected to news, information and resources through MCF’s newsletter, website and social media channels

# Empowering parents, caregivers and young people by:

## Our Impact:

**4,205**

support meetings with families provided them with personalized, individual help

“  
*My MCF Family Peer Support Specialist brings a new perspective, has a variety of experiences in the community and has a lot of resources that she makes accessible to families. She is very open and tries to make us feel comfortable with her.*”

—Caregiver

**972**

school meetings attended with families to build better partnerships between the family and school

## Help for Parents and Caregivers of Young People with Behavioral Health Needs

Parents and caregivers in all 24 of Maryland's jurisdictions received one-to-one support from MCF's trained staff, each of whom brings their own experience caring for their young person with mental health, substance use and/or other behavioral health needs. Support to parents and caregivers included listening to concerns, attending meetings, assisting to complete forms, explaining rights and connecting families to appropriate services and resources.

Services were provided at no cost to 1,333 Maryland families through MCF Family Peer Support Specialists.

In addition to receiving one-to-one support, parents and caregivers joined 21 MCF-hosted support groups in communities across the state to connect to others facing similar issues. Families also came together during 35 social and recreation events.

Local trainings promoted skill-building in areas including effective communications, parenting and working with schools.



- Helping them navigate services and systems
- Providing them with tools to advocate
- Connecting parents, caregivers and young people to each other



## New Support for Families of Young People with Substance Use Challenges

In September 2016, MCF launched a new program to provide intentional peer support and service navigation to parents and caregivers of youth and young adults with substance use issues. This enabled families to work one-to-one with an MCF staff member who has personal experience caring for a young person with substance use challenges.

In the first year of this program, six part-time staff worked with 211 families, helping parents and caregivers to:

- Access evaluation, assessment and treatment services
- Find recovery services and supports
- Understand insurance coverage
- Know their rights as a parent or caregiver
- Connect to other families dealing with similar challenges
- Access mental health services
- Learn about the continuum of services and supports available within the judicial system

## Our Impact:

**21**

support groups connected parents and caregivers to others facing similar issues

“ *My Family Peer Support Specialist was very compassionate and caring concerning my son and the struggles that he was facing. She helped me feel more relaxed and comforted me with her words of encouragement and compassion. She is extremely knowledgeable and educated in dealing with addiction.* ”

—Parent

**35**

social and recreational events brought families together in communities across the state

# Empowering parents, caregivers and young people by:

## Our Impact:

**107**

committees and boards at the local and state level heard the voice of families through MCF staff participation

“ *Your voice is so, so, so important. We need to hear your concerns on the state level.* ”

—Dr. Al Zachik, the Director of the Child and Adolescent Division of the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration, shared during MCF’s Family Day

**42,514**

connections were made through suicide prevention outreach efforts

**6,125**

individuals were reached with information about Maryland’s Good Samaritan Law

## Families Got Involved

MCF families worked together to improve services in mental health, substance use, schools and other systems throughout Maryland by sharing their experiences and making connections at the local, state and federal level. In February, 160 family members and advocates gathered for MCF’s 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Day in Annapolis. Families traveled from 20 of Maryland’s counties and Baltimore City.

## Family Voice Made a Difference

During the 2017 Maryland Legislative Session, MCF families and staff provided testimony on behalf of the Behavioral Health Administration budget and proposed legislation relating to behavioral health. The session ended with passage of a number of important bills that addressed mental health and substance use, as well as education. Of note, the HOPE Act passed. This bill requires the implementation of various strategies to reduce opioid overdoses and expand substance use treatment. It also aims to improve access to behavioral health services for all populations.

On the federal level, families reached out to their representatives in the House and Senate in response to proposed Medicaid cuts.

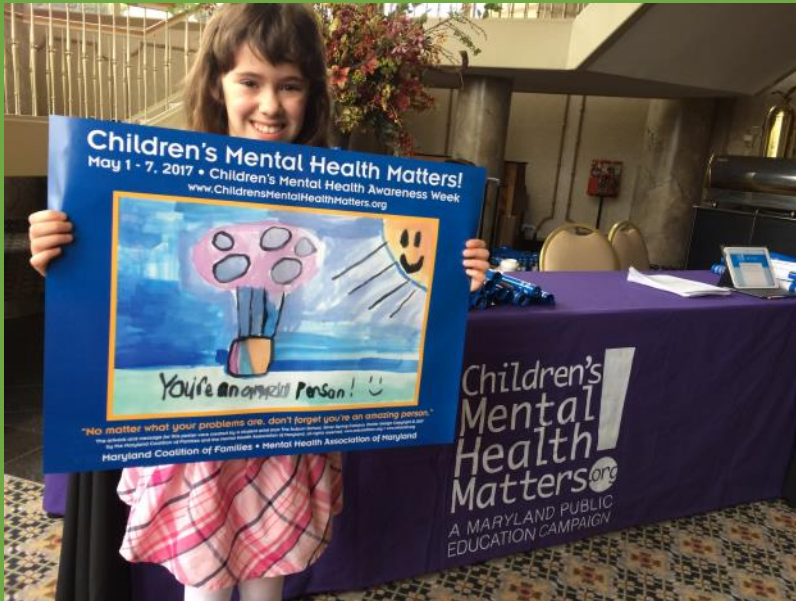


## Raising Awareness of a Life-Saving Law

As the number of drug overdoses continued to increase in Maryland, MCF’s Family Peer Support staff were in the community raising awareness of the Good Samaritan Law, a life-saving law which protects people assisting in an emergency overdose situation from arrest, as well as prosecution, for certain crimes.



- Ensuring their voice and perspective is heard
- Raising public awareness and fighting stigma



## Raising Awareness of Children's Mental Health

More than 500 communities and schools raised awareness of the importance of children's mental health across the state in May.

The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign was conducted in collaboration with the Mental Health Association of Maryland with support by the Department of Health - Behavioral Health Administration. Maryland's First Lady Yumi Hogan served as the Campaign's honorary chair.



## Our Impact:

**580**

schools and community organizations raised awareness of the importance of children's mental health in jurisdictions throughout Maryland

“  
*Through information sharing our children have become more vocal about their struggles with mental health issues and parents found our sessions to be self-empowering.*  
 ”

—2017 Children's Mental Health Matters! School Champion

**143,000**

materials and resources were shared through the Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign

# Empowering parents, caregivers and young people by:

- Helping them navigate services and systems
- Providing them with tools to advocate
- Connecting parents, caregivers and young people to each other

## Our Impact:

**68**

parents and caregivers graduated from MCF's two-day Family Leadership Retreats or 60-hour Family Leadership Institute

**64**

parents and caregivers trained in Active Parenting

**30**

young people from nine counties attended one-day Youth Leadership Retreats

“ *I have gone from feeling overwhelmed and powerless to having a specific plan for my child and a sense that there is help available out there that can be accessed. I also have a newfound passion for children's mental health that I know will continue.* ”

—2017 Family Leadership Institute graduate

## Strengthening Family Leadership

For the 14<sup>th</sup> year, MCF's Family Leadership Institute trained parents and caregivers of school-age children with mental health challenges to engage in partnerships that support their child's success in school and to be more effective leaders in communities statewide.

In addition to this 60-hour, six-weekend intensive training experience, MCF hosted two-day Family Leadership Retreats for parents and caregivers on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland.



## Youth Helping Youth

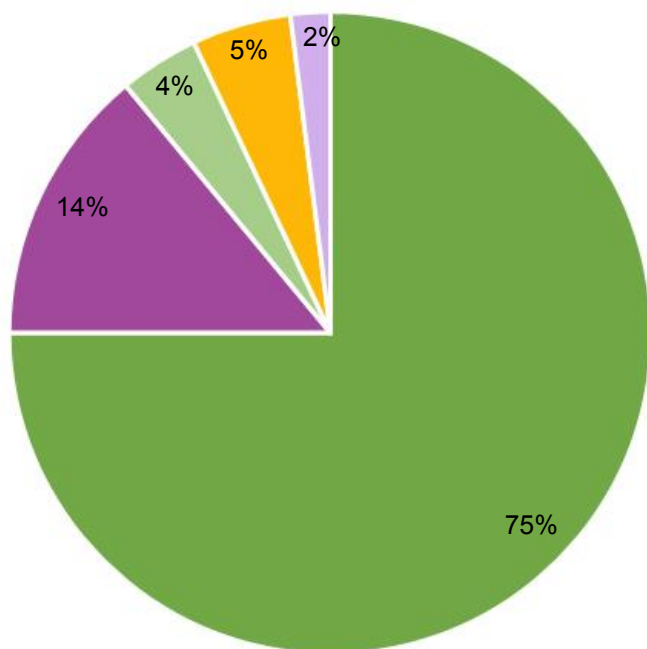
MCF's youth-driven programs empowered youth and young adults.

Through two, one-day Leadership Retreats in May, 30 young adults from nine Maryland counties connected with peers and learned how to strategically share their own experiences to help others.

In Prince George's County, a group of 15 youth met regularly to learn topics related to mental health and substance use and how to promote youth voice in the community. In support of systems change in the county, the youth team conducted outreach to launch a Youth Advisory Council.



# FY2017 Grant Revenue by Program Category



- Family Peer Support – Mental Health
- Family Peer Support – Substance Use
- Family Leadership Training
- Youth Programming
- Public Awareness

MCF's revenue totaled approximately \$3.5 million (unaudited) in Fiscal Year 2017 with grants accounting for 97% of this total. The chart to the left represents this grant revenue broken down by program category.

**Approximately 87% of funds received were spent on programs. \***

*\*based on Fiscal Year 2016 audited financial statements.*

## Our Funders

Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc.  
 Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.  
 Calvert County Health Department, Core Service Agency  
 Community Resource Development Partners  
 Dorchester County Public Schools  
 Family and Community Partnerships of Kent County  
 Harford County Department of Community Service, Local Management Board  
 Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services, Local Children's Board  
 Howard County Mental Health Authority  
 Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration

Maryland State Department of Education  
 Mental Health Association in Talbot County  
 Mid Shore Behavioral Health, Inc.  
 Prince George's County Health Department  
 Queen Anne's County Community Partnerships for Children and Families, Local Management Board  
 Somerset County Public Schools  
 University of Maryland, School of Medicine  
 University of Maryland, School of Social Work  
 Washington County Mental Health Authority, Inc.  
 The Zanyvl and Isabelle Krieger Fund

## Community Donors

Thank you to all our community donors who made activities like MCF's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Day in Annapolis possible.



# Board of Directors

as of June 30, 2017

## Officers

Karen Yudelson Sandler, President  
Janice Briley, Vice President  
Susan Cole, Secretary  
Gayland Carlisle, Treasurer

## Directors

Curtis Black  
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Edward Hiller

Gail Drescher  
Jolie Golomb  
Kathy Rentfrow  
Mary Bunch

Paul Buckman  
Robert "Bob"  
Topper

## Staff



Photo taken June 7, 2017. Please visit [www.mdcoaliton.org](http://www.mdcoaliton.org) for a staff directory.

## Get Involved



Subscribe to MCF's newsletter and connect on social media to stay up-to-date on news, advocacy, education and training opportunities.



Make a donation to support MCF's advocacy for families coping with the daily challenges of caring for a young person with behavioral health needs.



Volunteer your time to help make MCF's events and programs welcoming to families across the state.

[www.mdcoalition.org/connect](http://www.mdcoalition.org/connect)