



# FY2019 Annual Report

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# Growing Our Work to Serve Maryland Families

Dear Friends,

Just as the needs of Maryland's families grow and change, so does MCF. During Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019), we increased not only the number of families supported, but also the types of behavioral health needs addressed. We expanded our family peer support services beyond parents to include one-to-one support to anyone who cares for a loved one with substance use or gambling issues. We also began serving families with youth who are involved with the Department of Juvenile Services.

As we've grown to become one of the largest family-run organizations in the country, we have remained focused on our two-fold mission: 1) to connect, support and empower Maryland's families and, 2) to advocate to improve systems that impact individuals with behavioral health challenges. We do this using our personal experience caring for loved ones with behavioral health needs. Families were met with compassion and understanding as they connected with MCF Family Peer Support Specialists in all 24 of Maryland's jurisdictions (23 counties and Baltimore City).

Our leadership training programs empowered parents and caregivers across the state to become stronger leaders. Local support groups, trainings and family social activities connected families to others facing similar challenges. The voice and perspective of families were heard by legislators and decision makers, as families and partners raised awareness of behavioral health issues. Our youth leadership programming engaged young people to share their stories, fight stigma and give voice to young people with behavioral health disorders.

Thank you to our Board of Directors, our staff, our funders and our many community partners throughout the state for making MCF's growth in support to families possible. Your ongoing commitment enables MCF to make a difference for families across Maryland.



**Jane Plapinger**  
Executive Director

## Board of Directors *as of June 30, 2019*

### OFFICERS

**Karen Yudelson Sandler**  
*President*

**Kathy Rentfrow**  
*Vice President*

**Jolie Golomb**  
*Secretary*

**Gayland Carlisle**  
*Treasurer*

### DIRECTORS

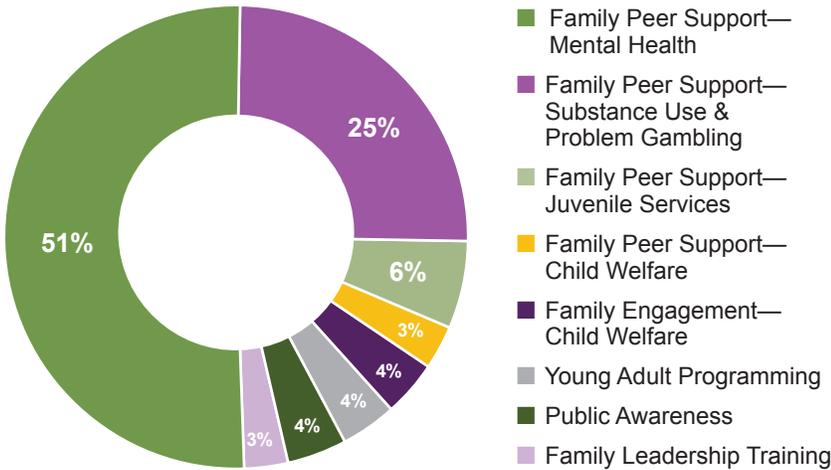
**Curtis Black**  
**Mary Bunch**  
**Pamela Chapman**  
**Cynthia Sumner**  
**Aaron Vander Meer**

## Staff

*Photo taken June 2019*



# MCF Grant Revenue by Program Type FY2019



MCF's revenue totaled approximately \$4.66 million in Fiscal Year 2019 with grants accounting for 99% of this total. The chart above represents this grant revenue broken down by program category.

*\*Administration is covered by program grants revenue.*

## Our Funders

Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.

Calvert County Health Department, Core Service Agency

Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

Maryland Department of Human Services, Social Services Administration

Dorchester County Public Schools

Howard County Government

Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration

Maryland State Department of Education

Mental Health Association of the Eastern Shore

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.

## Community Donors

Thank you to all our community donors and those who made activities like MCF's spring fundraiser possible.



## 2019 At-a-Glance

# 1,856

Families with loved ones who have behavioral health needs, including mental health, substance use or problem gambling challenges, received one-to-one peer support.

# 35,120

Individuals were connected to news, information and resources through MCF's newsletter, website and social media channels.

# 88

Parents, caregivers and young people connected with peers and built their leadership skills through an MCF retreat or training institute.

# Empowering Parents and Caregivers

## MEETING FAMILIES WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING

In Baltimore City and every county throughout Maryland, families with behavioral health needs connected with a trained MCF Family Peer Support Specialist, each of whom is a parent or caregiver of a loved one with a mental health, substance use or problem gambling issue.

That personal connection and the non-judgmental family peer support and navigation services they received, enabled these families to access appropriate services and resources and effectively address their challenges. Equally important, families receiving MCF services reported feeling a new sense of hope and strength, and a decreased sense of isolation and frustration.

During this year, 1,856 Maryland families received one-to-one support from MCF Family Peer Support Specialists. Thanks to the commitment of our government funding partners, MCF was able to provide these services at no cost to families.

*“After working with my Family Peer Support Specialist, I feel less stressed and more secure in my position as a caregiver and as an advocate. I am able to more accurately identify contacts and supports.”*

*—Caregiver of a 8-year-old child with mental health issues*

In addition, 1,221 parents, caregivers and other family members connected with others facing similar issues by participating in a variety of events hosted by MCF in communities across the state. These included 50 different support groups and 26 social and recreational family events. We also offered 39 local trainings for families, designed to promote skill-building for effective communications, positive parenting and working collaboratively with schools.

## WHY FAMILIES COME TO MCF

Among those seeking help with mental health issues:

- **43%** were seeking mental health treatment and resources
- **28%** indicated school problems as the primary reason for seeking help

Among those seeking help with substance use issues:

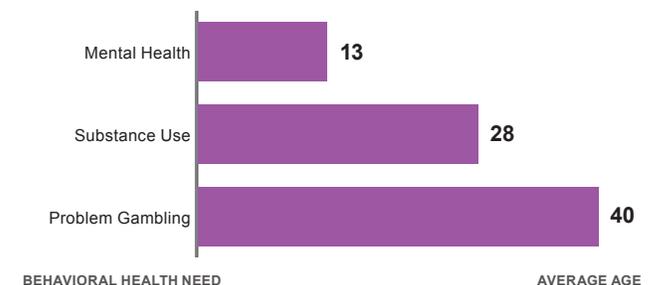
- **77%** were seeking substance use treatment and resources
- **6%** were in need of mental health treatment and resources

Family safety, help with navigating systems, and involvement with agencies like the Department of Juvenile Services and the Department of Social Services are among the other reasons that families reached out for MCF Family Peer Support.

## AVERAGE AGE OF PERSON WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES

MCF provides support to those who care for someone with behavioral health issues. The graph below shows the average age of the family member that is experiencing these struggles.

Average Age When First Connected to MCF



## COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSES

While a behavioral health diagnosis is not required to receive support from MCF, 96% of those whose families received support for mental health issues had at least one mental health diagnosis. From more than 100 different diagnoses reported, the most common were:

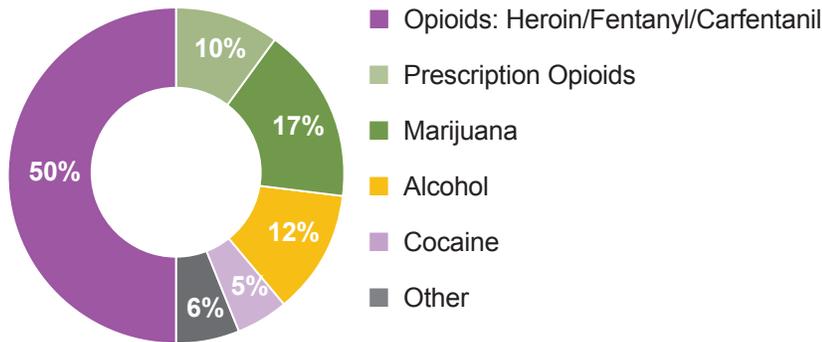
- **66% Impulse control and conduct disorders**, including attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)

- **23% Anxiety disorders**, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and generalized anxiety disorder
- **14% Mood disorders**, including depression and bi-polar disorders
- **14% Autism spectrum disorder**

## SUBSTANCE USE

Among those families receiving Family Peer Support for substance use issues, opioids (heroin/fentanyl/carfentanil/prescription opioids) were the primary substance being used.

Primary Substance of Choice Among Loved Ones



## NEW SUPPORT FOR LOVED ONES OF THOSE WITH GAMBLING PROBLEMS

In February 2018, MCF launched peer support and navigation services to spouses, siblings, parents and other loved ones of those who are experiencing problems related to their gambling activity.

This expansion enabled families to receive one-to-one support from an MCF Family Peer Support Specialist who has experience caring for someone with gambling issues.

Since the program began, 33 families from 11 Maryland jurisdictions received support for problem gambling. Of these, 51% of those supported were the spouse of a person with problem gambling; 21% were the parent; and 15% were the adult child.

# Our Impact

## 1,308

Parents, caregivers and other family members participated in MCF events across the state

## 65

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

## 22

Young people (18–26 years old) participated in a Taking Flight overnight retreat focused on building leadership and advocacy skills to advance behavioral health initiatives

## 436

Parents and caregivers connected to others facing similar issues through Support Groups

## 785

Parents, caregivers and other family members came together at other local events across the state



# Our Impact

Families received personalized, individual help through:

**4,522**

in-person meetings

**7,359**

phone contacts

**751**

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

**151**

treatment admissions for substance use recovery



## STRENGTHENING FAMILY LEADERSHIP

Parents and caregivers of school-age children with mental health challenges learned to better support their child's success in school and to be more effective leaders in their community through MCF's 16<sup>th</sup> annual Family Leadership Institute.

This 60-hour, six-weekend intensive training program brought together parents and caregivers from Baltimore City and 11 counties across the state.

Additionally, MCF hosted two weekend-long Family Leadership Retreats to promote leadership development amongst parents and caregivers in Baltimore City and in Southern Maryland.

*“I feel more confident that I am capable of navigating the school system efficiently to get my child not only the help she needs, but also the happiness and success she deserves.”*

– 2019 Family Leadership Institute graduate

## YOUTH HELPING YOUTH

Through Taking Flight, MCF's statewide youth and young adult advisory council, young people developed leadership skills and worked to reduce stigma around behavioral health issues.

In Prince George's County, a group of youth met regularly to learn topics related to mental health and substance use, and how to promote the youth voice in their community.

During a two-day, youth-led retreat, young people from across the state connected with peers and learned “strategic sharing”—how to talk about their own experiences to help others. Young people who have experienced behavioral health challenges formed connections with peers and were empowered by the awareness of their shared experiences.

## FAMILY VOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

MCF families made connections and shared their experiences at the local, state and federal level to improve services in mental health, substance use, and other systems that serve families with behavioral health needs.

Throughout the year, MCF Family Peer Support Specialists attended 572 meetings through participation in 109 different committees and advisory boards at the state and local level to share the voice of families with policy-makers.

Through our Caregiver Engagement Project, MCF hired and trained 13 caregivers, including biological parents, adoptive parents and grandparents, whose children had prior involvement with the child welfare system to serve as Caregiver Advisors. With the goal of improving the child welfare system, these Caregiver Advisors participated in Maryland Department of Human Services' committees and workgroups where they shared their personal experiences and made recommendations that will inform policy regarding child welfare in the state.

During the 2019 Maryland Legislative Session, MCF participated in advocacy efforts that helped to:

- Fund Mental Health Coordinators in every school district in the state
- Increase compensation for behavioral health providers
- Provide for screening, evaluation and access to medication-assisted treatment in jails to individuals with opioid use disorders

MCF families and staff also provided both written and oral testimony on other proposed legislation relating to behavioral health, including bills on insurance parity and safe consumption facilities.

*“Caring for my teen-aged grandson has been a real struggle. My Family Peer Support Specialist has helped me to understand his ADHD diagnosis and how it affects his ability to learn. She taught me how to prepare for school meetings and how to work with the teachers as my partners.”*

*—Grandmother of 13-year-old child with ADHD*

## RAISING AWARENESS

In the spring, MCF partnered with the Mental Health Association of Maryland to coordinate the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign.

*“Our Family Peer Support Specialist was someone who knew how to listen, and knew how and where to find help. They have consistently gone far beyond what we were expecting. We now have more hope than we might have had for our daughter's recovery. For all of this, we'll always be grateful.”*

*—Father of young adult struggling with substance use*



Maryland's First Lady, Yumi Hogan, served as the Campaign's honorary chair.

The Campaign distributed 456,355 materials and resources to a record-breaking 876 schools and community organizations across the state to raise awareness of the importance of children's mental health.

MCF staff around the state reached 18,559 individuals with information about Maryland's Good Samaritan Law.

Suicide prevention outreach efforts made 56,642 connections around the state.

# How You Can Advance MCF's Work

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Families find their way when they connect with MCF. They connect to resources and support for their family's behavioral health needs, and they find:

*“Encouragement to know that I am not alone.”*

*“Hope when you think it's time to give up.”*

*“The courage to speak up, advocate, and help others.”*

More than 2,000 families were served by MCF last year. With your help, that connection—to encouragement, to hope, and to the help they need—can happen for many more families across the state.

## MAKE A CONNECTION

You can amplify MCF's impact by connecting others to this work. Refer MCF to:

- Parents and caregivers of young people with mental health, substance use or problem gambling issues
- Spouses, partners, siblings, parents and other loved ones who care about someone with substance use or problem gambling issues
- Potential employees seeking a career that offers purpose and meaning
- Potential donors

## Get Involved

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**SUBSCRIBE**

Subscribe to MCF's newsletter and connect on social media to stay informed and inspired as well as to find resources for mental health, substance use, problem gambling, self-care, advocacy, training, support groups and more.

**DONATE**

Offer a financial gift to support MCF's service and advocacy for families with the challenges of caring for a loved one with behavioral health needs.

**VOLUNTEER**

Volunteer your time and energy in support of MCF's family events and programs across the state.

10632 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 234 | Columbia, MD 21044

410-730-8267 | [mdcoalition.org](http://mdcoalition.org)

