

**RESOLUTION R-2022-133
LUZERNE COUNTY COUNCIL**

*A Resolution of the Luzerne County Council Urging Northeast Pennsylvania Lawmakers
to Increase Funding to Luzerne County for Mental Health Related Services*

WHEREAS, the cost of providing mental health services to Luzerne County citizens has increased by an estimated 30% over the last eleven years; and

WHEREAS, despite the rising costs of providing mental health services to Luzerne County citizens, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has not increased its funding for such services in eleven years; and

WHEREAS, the Covid-19 pandemic further increased demand for mental health services in Luzerne County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the impending closures of First Hospital in Kingston and Berwick Hospital will put a further strain on Luzerne County's resources and ability to provide adequate mental health services to its citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is presently a \$2.8 billion surplus in the Pennsylvania budget "rainy day fund"; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also has an estimated \$2.2 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funds that have not been earmarked for specific projects or services; and

WHEREAS, the lack of an increase in funding to Luzerne County for mental health services in eleven years combined with the impending closures of First Hospital and Berwick Hospital stand to have a devastating impact on Luzerne County and the families of the individuals requiring mental health services; and

WHEREAS, Luzerne County Council believes it is in the best interest of its citizens to urge Northeast Pennsylvania lawmakers to lobby for the use of surplus "rainy day" or unused American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide for a minimum 10% increase in funding to Luzerne County to help provide adequate mental health services including, but not limited to, expanding existing treatment court options, development of the "Fairweather Lodge" program, development of a "Family Group Decision Making Team" specific to Luzerne County's MH/DS cases, expanding mobile crisis services and expanding housing opportunities for individuals utilizing the Luzerne County MH/DS system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Luzerne County Council does hereby urge Northeast Pennsylvania lawmakers to lobby for the use of surplus “rainy day” or unused American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide for a minimum 10% increase in funding to Luzerne County for the provision of mental health services.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately.

ADOPTED at a meeting of Luzerne County Council held on September 13, 2022.


ROLL CALL VOTE (11-0)


YES: Bienias, Lescavage, Lombardo, McDermott, McGinley, Mitchell, Perry, Radle, Thornton, SJ Urban and Wolovich

LUZERNE COUNTY COUNCIL

By: 
Kendra Radle, Chair

LUZERNE COUNTY MANAGER

By: 
Randy Robertson, County Manager

Attest: 
Sharon Lawrence, Clerk of Council