

2025 National Dialogues on Behavioral Health Conference

Behavioral Health in a Changing Environment: Adapting and Thriving

New Orleans, October 26-29, 2025

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

In the current rapidly changing environment, the future of behavioral health services is in flux. Behavioral health services were already challenged in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic: the prevalence of mental illnesses more than doubled and the workforce contracted substantially, resulting in a crisis related to both access and workforce development and training.

The recent impending changes in federal health policies, financing and structures exacerbate these uncertainties and make the development of response options even more of an imperative. Projected Medicaid funding levels could drastically change behavioral health scenarios.

In the recent past, there have been major advances in the behavioral health field in the development of crisis services, integrated care, the adoption of peer support services, early psychosis intervention, research related to effective treatments and medication, disaster management, and the dissemination of evidence-based practices, both for adults and children and adolescents. In this rapidly changing environment, the challenge is how to build on these gains and advances. Or, conversely, how do we ensure that these gains and advances are not lost or impaired?

The focus of the conference is to provide direction, parameters and options related to key areas that will help define the future of behavioral health systems and services. These key areas are:

FUNDING – How does one cope at different levels with impending funding changes at federal and state levels?

ACCESS – How do we assure that vulnerable populations are accessing appropriate services?

CONTINUUM OF CARE – What are the key elements of the future continuum of care?

BEST PRACTICES – How do we ensure that we are incorporating the most effective services in our continuum of care?

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – How do we build and support the workforce for the future?