

BHECON 2019 Sponsorship Request

Increasing Treatment and Support Services for People with Serious Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System

Program Focus

BHECON: Facilitating data-driven conversations that lead to mental health policy and criminal justice system reform to increase treatment and support services for people with serious mental illness. The Behavioral Health + Economics Network, known as BHECON (pronounced “beacon”) unites diverse stakeholders to advance policy reforms to strengthen federal and state behavioral health delivery systems. Led by the National Council for Behavioral Health with state partners, BHECON identifies policy barriers and solutions needed to establish access to a comprehensive continuum of care, particularly to prevent contact with the criminal justice system or to facilitate entry into care for those leaving the criminal justice system. BHECON empowers concerned stakeholders to launch policy and practice changes required to protect and expand access to a broad array of needed treatments and supports.

2019: Focusing on criminal justice and serious mental illness. Because of the lack of investment in a comprehensive community-based system of care for people living with serious mental illness (SMI), far too many people with these illnesses have contact with the criminal justice system. With more than half of county jail inmates experiencing mental health and/or substance use disorders, solutions are needed to promote continuity of treatment for justice-involved populations. Navigating the complexities of fragmented criminal justice and health care systems can be challenging for providers who treat justice-involved people living with mental health and/or substance use disorders. New solutions are needed to help this vulnerable population. One such solution that is often under-utilized is long-acting injectable medications (LAIs), an evidence-based treatment delivery modality that address barriers to continuity and improve patient experience. BHECON is designed to identify and advocate for these kinds of system improvements.

More needs to be done to advocate for federal and state policies to ensure that SMI is not a jail sentence. BHECON provides a platform for diverse stakeholders to discuss policy solutions supported by data that have the potential to address this critical issue. BHECON works to shine a national and local spotlight on the issue of SMI and advocate for services for this often-overlooked population.

Background

Individuals living with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders (SUD) are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, typically for non-violent crimes or low-level offenses. This suggests that lack of access to treatment for SMI/SUD is a factor in incarceration risk. Upon release, many individuals are not connected with community-based behavioral health services, which increases the likelihood of re-arrest. Community-based treatment lowers the chances of reincarceration, decreases the burden on jails and prisons to provide mental health services and improves outcomes for these individuals by providing evidence-based treatment that can help them avoid arrest due to their condition. Unfortunately, policy discussions about how to ensure that people with SMI who are also involved with the justice system have access to adequate behavioral health care all too often occur in industry-specific silos and are divorced from scientific and economic data on the impact of key reforms in both the behavioral health and criminal justice systems.

The Year Ahead: Proposed BHECON Activities

Commitment to criminal justice reform and serious mental illness. Applying data and successful models from around the country, BHECON will advocate for both state and federal policy changes to better divert individuals in need of evidenced-based behavioral health treatment services from jails and prisons, provide access to treatment while incarcerated and increase the supports available to individuals once released from incarceration. BHECON will also focus on serious mental illness to ensure widespread public understanding of the need for additional treatment support in communities.

Pass federal legislation. With input from prior BHECON participants and allied state and national stakeholders, the National Council will draft a federal legislative proposal designed to support and increase the use of long-acting therapies as one of several tools in reducing involvement in criminal justice system. The legislation may also address other policy reforms articulated in the BHECON Consensus Statement and prior years' forums, such as diversion, re-entry services, accessibility of treatment and/or behavioral health workforce issues that impact the criminal justice system directly. The National Council will raise the awareness of the important role of long-acting therapies in treating mental illness with policymakers, the public and other stakeholders and will make this a focal point of state-based events sponsored in state supported by the BHECON project.

Updating of Consensus Statement. Starting with the themes identified in prior years' Consensus Statement, BHECON will update, revise and redraft a consensus statement focused exclusively on criminal justice diversion, treatment and re-entry issues aligned with the federal legislation proposed by the National Council related to crisis stabilization and re-entry. Based on current activities and developments in participating states, the consensus statement may also address state-level policy reforms needed to improve access to care and reduce recidivism among people with mental illness. BHECON will reach out to participating state associations and other state and national stakeholders to obtain a wide range of endorsements for the Consensus Statement.

Public promotion of Consensus Statement. The National Council will promote and support state BHECON partners in publicizing the Consensus Statement through a variety of mechanisms. Communications and promotion activities may include (but are not limited to):

- Publication of the Consensus Statement on the national BHECON website.
- Promotion of the Consensus Statement via BHECON and partners' social media channels.
- Publication of op-eds by state BHECON partners, highlighting the key recommendations from the Consensus Statement.
- Dissemination of the Consensus Statement to key state and national policymakers with a request for prompt action on the recommendations.
- Presentation of the Consensus Statement at state or national conferences of mental health providers, law enforcement officials, state policymakers or other stakeholders, as feasible and appropriate.
- Pursuit of traditional media coverage of the recommendations included within the Consensus Statement, including inviting members of the media to the state events and educating the press about the impact of these recommendations on mental health care within their state.

Engagement of states in sponsoring state-level forums and advocacy events to improve treatment and support services within the criminal justice system. Over the past two years, BHECON partnered with a total of eight states – Connecticut, Massachusetts, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Kansas and Minnesota – to host policy forums that identified key issues and highlighted effective policy solutions. In 2019, BHECON will solicit interest and offer support to these states, as funding allows, to host events to educate policymakers about the need for evidenced-based behavioral health treatment services for those with serious mental illness involved in the criminal justice system and about potential policy solutions. These events may take the form of a forum, breakfast for legislators, a legislative reception, a tabling event in the statehouse, a site visit to a community mental health center, candidate forums or any other type of event that gives ready access to educate legislators and candidates and advocate for these solutions. BHECON will assist states in their advocacy efforts to improve treatment and support services for people with SMI through diversion, re-entry and treatment, including the use of long-acting therapies to decrease recidivism. With the assistance of BHECON, each participating state will work to raise the profile of the issues of serious mental illness in the criminal justice system in their communities through local media, member outreach and partnerships with local stakeholders.

National BHECON Forum. Bringing BHECON states together has become a hallmark of the program and received highly positive feedback in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, the National BHECON Forum will bring together all participating states under the shared focus of criminal justice reform to understand current challenges experienced by our state partners, share lessons learned and look at delivery models such as Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) and other community initiatives that can be replicated. Input and consensus on federal legislative priorities concerning criminal justice reform and the use of LAIs will also be discussed at length to formalize a plan among all states to engage their local criminal justice organizations in advocacy efforts.

Continued focus on research and data to support policy change. Integral to BHECON’s policy efforts is the generation of health economic data that considers not just the health outcomes associated with the appropriate (and conversely, inappropriate) treatment of individuals living with serious mental illness, but also the broader economic impact on states, communities and individuals. BHECON includes researchers as key partners in network activities and works with them to translate the available data and science into compelling and useful information for advocates and policymakers. In addition to the Research Hub activities noted previously, research and data-focused activities for 2019 will include:

- **Creating new state-specific details** to meet the needs of all BHECON cohort members related to criminal justice reform, use of long-acting injectables, diversion, re-entry and treatment programs and other relevant topics. In collaboration with the USC Schaeffer Center, key data points related to criminal justice policy agendas will be identified and further explored to support advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels.
- **Continuing to translate research into advocacy** by publishing user-friendly data summaries in support of states’ advocacy efforts. These documents – which may include fact sheets, web content, social media posts, shareable infographics, advocacy toolkits or other types of communications – will make the case for investing in services and will be designed to support BHECON states’ advocacy activities at the state and federal level.
- **Continuing to use earned media** to raise the profile of this issue through op-eds, letters to the editor and focused media outreach and engagement around each of the state-level events. BHECON will

recruit media spokespeople from diverse fields such as law enforcement, veterans, emergency services personnel, business owners and others.

Hosting a Congressional briefing or other Capitol Hill legislative event for key policymakers and other stakeholders. The briefing or legislative event will feature the federal legislation and the Consensus Statement and will address the predominant themes identified at the state forums, potential policy solutions and the supporting data collected by the USC Schaeffer Center to demonstrate the importance of access to community-based behavioral health care. Additionally, the federal legislation will be presented, supported by state testimony and other information, to provide solutions critical to criminal justice reform.

Other Activities:

- *Partnership with Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics at University of Southern California.* BHECON will continue to coordinate with researchers at the Schaeffer Center to develop chartbooks for each Cohort 3 state outlining the prevalence and impact of untreated mental illness in their state. In addition, follow-up will be conducted on the 2018 Data Workgroup efforts as needed to ensure the widescale accessibility of the outcomes and to address any questions associated with the call for papers. Finally, BHECON will work with the Schaeffer Center to further delve into data related to criminal justice-involved clients, costs of service delivery and impacts to states and the country when key reform issues are not properly addressed.
- *Maintain the BHECON website and social media presence.* BHECON will build upon enhancements to the website in 2018 by continuously updating content and launching a brand refresh to highlight Year 3's commitment to criminal justice reform and serious mental illness. There will also be a continuation of BHECON's successful Twitter growth through tweeting regularly on developments, models, news, partnership engagement and data infographics focused on criminal justice reform. BHECON will engage with Twitter chats and social media campaigns focused on the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice as available.

Sponsorship Opportunities

To support the above activities, BHECON is offering the following sponsorship opportunities to funders:

Leadership Level: For \$300,000, a Leadership Sponsor will receive the highest possible visibility at BHECON events and on related collateral. In return for being a sponsor at this level, a Leadership Sponsor will receive verbal and written **company acknowledgement** at all events as permissible, unlimited **complimentary attendance** for company representatives at all BHECON events, **display of the company logo** on all BHECON-published materials as appropriate, written **weekly updates** on BHECON activities and **bi-weekly telephone updates** on BHECON activities. Sponsorship at the Leadership level will provide support for all the proposed activities described in this prospectus, including the engagement of **five** states in sponsoring state-level forums and advocacy events to improve treatment and support services within the criminal justice system.

Advocate Level: For \$200,000, sponsorship at the Advocate level would include **complimentary attendance** for one company representative at all BHECON events, **display of the company logo** on all BHECON-published materials as appropriate, written **weekly updates** on BHECON activities and **bi-weekly telephone updates**. Sponsorship at the Advocate level will provide support for all the proposed activities described in this

prospectus, including the engagement of **three** states in sponsoring state-level forums and advocacy events to improve treatment and support services within the criminal justice system.

Patron Level: Up to \$100,000, sponsorship at the Patron level would include written **weekly updates** on BHECON activities and **bi-weekly telephone updates**. Sponsorship at the Patron level will provide support for the engagement of **one** state in sponsoring a state-level forum and advocacy event to improve treatment and support services within the criminal justice system.

Customized Level: At this level, sponsors will receive written **weekly updates** on BHECON activities and **bi-weekly telephone updates** with the level of support determined by the sponsor.

About Us

The National Council for Behavioral Health is the unifying voice of America's mental health and addictions treatment organizations. Together with our 3,000 member organizations, serving over 10 million adults, children and families living with mental illnesses and addictions, the National Council is committed to all Americans having access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery. The National Council introduced Mental Health First Aid USA and more than 1.5 million individuals have been trained. To learn more about the National Council, visit www.TheNationalCouncil.org.

Background and Expertise

The National Council for Behavioral Health is a respected and active participant in the policymaking and advocacy process. Over our decades of work in Washington, D.C., we have forged strong relationships with Republican and Democratic lawmakers, cultivating behavioral health champions within the halls of Congress and educating rank-and-file lawmakers about the importance of investing in community-based mental health and addiction care. Our approach to policymaking and advocacy positions the National Council as a bidirectional bridge between Congress and constituents. We update member organizations and front-line providers about recent developments inside the Beltway that affect their service delivery, while serving as a conduit of information from local and state advocates to inform federal policy decisions.

With our state-level behavioral health association partners, we mobilize advocates to effect policy change and play a convening role in unifying national groups around a common agenda. Since 2017, the National Council has sponsored the BHECON project and worked in nine states to successfully drive policy change related to the behavioral health workforce, access to evidence-based treatment of mental illness and diversion of people with mental health and substance use disorders from the criminal justice system into community-based treatment. The National Council's annual Public Policy Institute and Hill Day, held in partnership with 20 other national mental health and addiction organizations, regularly brings more than 600 providers, consumers, family members and other behavioral health stakeholders to Washington to directly connect with their elected officials around issues that affect their organizations or the people they serve.

The National Council has led numerous successful advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., including passage of the Excellence in Mental Health Act demonstration in 2014, the successful fight to block harmful restrictions to mental health medications in Medicare Part D in 2014, the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act in 2016 and introduction of key line items in the Health and Human Services appropriations bill

funding integrated health service delivery in community-based settings (now funded for 10 consecutive years) and Mental Health First Aid trainings (now funded for five consecutive years).

The National Council leads and is involved in numerous D.C.-based coalitions, including the Mental Health Liaison Group (whose Board of Directors is chaired by the National Council's Chuck Ingoglia), the Partnership for Medicaid, the Partnership for Part D Access, the Coalition for Whole Health, the Coalition for Health Funding, the Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition and more. With input and collaboration from our state association partners, we also support state-level advocacy on key topics such as Mental Health First Aid. The members of our Policy and Advocacy team bring decades of experience in mental health and addiction delivery and policy, grassroots organizing and mobilization and bipartisan messaging and communications. With our strong reputation for constructive bipartisanship and history of close collaboration with state partners, we are uniquely positioned for successfully leveraging the activities of the Behavioral Health + Economics Network into concrete policy change.