

## OVERVIEW OF BHC AND BHAC ROLES WITHIN JEFFERSON COUNTY

The **Behavioral Health Consortium (BHC)** and the **Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC)** are distinct yet complementary entities within Jefferson County’s behavioral health system, each fulfilling unique roles while aligning on shared goals:

### **BHAC as County Funding Administrator role within JCPH**

- Serves as Jefferson County’s primary administrator for specific behavioral health funds, including the 1/10th of 1% Hargrove tax funds and a portion of the opioid settlement funds, managed within the county’s public health office.
- Allocates funding to programs addressing mental health, substance use prevention, housing support, youth behavioral health, and therapeutic courts, ensuring resources support county-wide behavioral health priorities.

### **BHC as a Consortium**

- Functions as an independent consortium that brings together stakeholders across public health, law enforcement, healthcare, and community organizations to create a cohesive and accessible behavioral health service network for the county.
- Funded directly from separate opioid settlement funds and grant pursuits, the BHC’s funding structure allows it the flexibility to address emerging community needs, support cross-sector projects, and foster collaboration across county agencies.

## DISTINCT FUNDING AND OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

### **BHAC’s County-Wide Funding Role**

- Oversees targeted funds to address behavioral health needs through a structured RFP process, prioritizing county-wide behavioral health goals while aligning resources with program-specific requirements.

### **BHC’s Independent Funding Structure**

- While focused on defining and addressing county goals, the BHC remains financially independent of BHAC-administered funds. This independence enables the BHC to quickly respond to community needs and mobilize collaborative projects that enhance Jefferson County’s behavioral health landscape.

## GOALS OF THE MOU BETWEEN BHC AND BHAC

The **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** aims to formalize a non-hierarchical partnership that enhances collaboration, supports mutually identified priorities, ensures resource

alignment, and productive data sharing. The MOU will help integrate behavioral health efforts county-wide, enabling Jefferson County to create a unified response to behavioral health needs.

## KEY AREAS OF THE PROPOSED MOU

### Membership and Participation

- **Objective:** Establish **mutual representation** to enhance strategic alignment and active engagement across both entities. By including BHAC representatives in BHC discussions, and that BHC director has a seat on the BHAC committee, the MOU will support a cohesive approach to behavioral health across Jefferson County.
- **Action:** Designate BHAC committee members to participate in BHC sessions, with a focus on integrating Hargrove-funded programs and opioid settlement-supported initiatives. In turn, BHC's representation on the BHAC committee will bring consortium-level insights into funding deliberations, ensuring that BHAC allocations are informed by real-time community needs and broad consortium goals.

### Data Sharing and Collaboration – Requires a Data Sharing Agreement as a subcomponent of the MOU, as that agreement may get updated asynchronously.

- **Objective:** Develop a data-sharing framework that combines BHC's community-level insights with BHAC's program-specific data, creating a holistic view of behavioral health needs and outcomes.
- **Action:** Establish a clear protocol for data exchange that allows both entities to benefit from shared insights. This approach will support clarified understanding of the county players funding and help track service impacts effectively.

### Strategic Planning and Coordination

- **Objective:** Define roles and develop shared priorities through regular planning sessions to integrate services and reduce silos in behavioral health initiatives.
- **Action:** Create joint strategic planning sessions, where the BHC's consortium-driven goals can guide community-driven priorities, while BHAC's financial oversight ensures alignment with funding requirements and effectiveness across programs.

### Funding Synergy and Project Collaboration

- **Objective:** Identify co-investment opportunities that leverage resources to meet shared goals, enhancing services such as harm reduction, housing, and youth behavioral health.
- **Action:** Review both entities' funding sources to identify joint project opportunities, ensuring coordinated use of resources. This alignment will support county-wide, cross-sector projects,

and integrate funding for under-utilized areas, including those managed by the BHAC, like therapeutic courts.

### Procedural Details and Termination Clauses

- **Duration and Renewal:** Set the MOU for a fixed term (e.g., two years) with periodic reviews for renewal. This approach ensures the MOU remains responsive to changing community needs and aligns with the BHC’s strategic commitment to transparency and data-driven decision-making.
- **Amendments:** Allow for amendments through mutual agreement, with flexibility for periodic updates to specific sections, such as data-sharing protocols or role definitions. This supports innovation and cross-sector collaboration, allowing the MOU to adapt to emerging needs and evidence-based best practices.
- **Termination Clause:** Permit either party to terminate the MOU with 60 days’ written notice. Prior to termination, both parties agree to meet to explore alternatives, such as amendment or restructuring. This clause preserves service continuity and aligns with the BHC’s focus on resilience and holistic community well-being.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Include a two-step process for resolving disputes: initial informal mediation between the parties, escalating to third-party mediation if necessary. This process reinforces the BHC’s commitment to transparent governance and community-focused solutions.
- **Accountability and Reporting:** Require annual reporting from both parties to provide transparency into shared goals and achievements, with metrics focused on stigma reduction, service accessibility, and harm reduction. This reporting reinforces the BHC’s mission of equitable, person-centered care and aligns with its vision of fostering a resilient and unified Jefferson County.

### ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OF THE MOU

By establishing mutual representation within the BHC and BHAC committees, the MOU will:

- **Strengthen strategic alignment** between county-wide behavioral health funding and consortium priorities.
- Improve **integration and engagement** across agencies, particularly under-engaged groups.
- **Enhance data-informed decision-making** through consistent data sharing.
- **Optimize resource allocation**, across agencies, particularly those receiving funding from multiple regional funding avenues, creating a streamlined, resilient behavioral health network in Jefferson County.