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Senate Bill 1000 | House Bill 1300 Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs, Budget & Taxation

Ways and Means & Appropriations Committees

February 17, 2020

Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health, mental illness and substance use. We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 1000 | House Bill 1300.

SB 1000 | HB 1300 makes broad reforms to the state's educational system, including measures to increase and improve school behavioral health services and supports. As chair of the Maryland Children's Behavioral Health Coalition (CBHC), MHAMD is pleased at the increased attention being paid to the behavioral health needs of Maryland schoolchildren.

Last year, the bridge legislation included dedicated funding for mental health services coordinators which was a first step to increase coordination of school behavioral health services to students with behavioral health needs. In mid-2018, CBHC developed and presented a series of recommendations to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education highlighting the connection between increased school behavioral health supports and improved student outcomes (see attached one-pager). These recommendations included increased training for school personnel, the scaling of school behavioral health services in all jurisdictions, systematic screening and identification of student needs and a statewide system of accountability and outcome measurement.

CBHC is elated that the recommendations adopted in the Commission's January 2019 Interim report¹ (see Element 4b beginning on pg. 111) are in SB 1000 | HB 1300. When schools intervene early and coordinate services for students in need of additional supports, it helps to improve academic outcomes. While CBHC is appreciative of the inclusion of the recommendations in the bill, adequate funding of school behavioral health is necessary to witness the academic achievements anticipated by this historic measure. We urge full funding of the provisions to increase behavioral health supports and also request that accountability and data collection be part of the bill. MSDE should build on existing school behavioral health outcome measurements to develop an integrated and uniform district and state level data measurement system. Data collection can inform resource utilization and programming for the students.

MHAMD and CBHC thank both the Commission and the legislature for their work and commitment to ensuring that Maryland's school system is one of the best in the world. We **support with amendments** SB 1000 | HB 1300, and look forward to working with all stakeholders towards full implementation of the Commission's recommendations over the coming months and years.

¹ <http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/2019-Interim-Report-of-the-Commission.pdf>

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