

**Senate Bill 453 Behavioral Health Administration – Children with Mental Disorders –
List of Available Services**

Finance Committee

February 18, 2020

Position: SUPPORT

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 453.

SB 453 requires the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to maintain an updated list of behavioral health services in select categories available to children with a mental health disorder.

Children and youth with behavioral health needs have limited treatment options, and thus requiring BHA to publish the services that are available to families would help them in search of appropriate care. Hosting a searchable site of the available services for children in need of a mental health or substance use supports in their county will help parents locate a program near their home. SB 453 will also help families know in advance if their health insurance covers the necessary behavioral health service sought for their children.

The number of children and youth accessing the Public Behavioral Health System between FY 15 to FY 17 increased, 62,659 and 68,838, respectively¹. The majority of the services utilized were “outpatient treatment services by individual practitioners and outpatient clinics, case management, and youth psychiatric rehabilitation services.”² Thus, the list of published services should be expanded to include other programs that care for children with specialized needs. BHA should also inform the public of where they can find services for children eligible for 1915 (i), residential treatment care, respite care, and substance use treatment programs. Without the inclusion of these additional services in the list published online, families will lack complete information on who and where they can go for behavioral health care.

SB 453 will ensure families know where they can find a licensed provider for a behavioral health service necessary for the wellbeing of the child. For this reason, **MHAMD supports this bill and urges a favorable report.**

¹ <https://mdpsych.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/MSAR-11596-School-Safety-Subcabinet-Behavioral-Gap-Analysis-Report.pdf>

² *Id.*