



February 18, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – SB 520: Behavioral Health Programs - Opioid Treatment Services -
Limitation on Licenses

Dear Chairman Kelley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS opposes Senate Bill 520 (SB 520). Individuals suffering from opioid use disorder exist in all regions of Maryland. Thus, the location of opioid treatment services should be based solely upon need and not upon misconceptions of those in need. A 2013 National Institute on Drug Abuse-supported study suggested that citizens' concerns about opioid treatment services fostering serious crime are unwarranted. Dr. Susan Boyd and her colleagues at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore found that crime rates in the immediate vicinities of the City's methadone treatment centers were level with the rates in the surrounding neighborhoods. Dr. Boyd believes that such empirical evidence demonstrating that opioid treatment services are not hot spots for crime will reduce public resistance to the building of new centers, and thus remove an impediment to making opioid treatment services more widely available. Unfortunately, SB 520 moves the Baltimore City and the rest of the state in the opposite direction.

For these reasons, MPS respectfully asks the committee for an unfavorable report on SB 520. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett, Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society