



**House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 18, 2020**

**House Bill 448
Health Care Practitioners - Telehealth**

Support

The National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence – Maryland supports House Bill 448. Fundamentally, NCADD-Maryland believes that the appropriate use of technology in the delivery of somatic and behavioral health care should be utilized to its potential. Telehealth is an important part of a health care delivery system that leads to success in reaching several important goals:

- Access to outpatient specialty care, reducing preventable hospitalizations and reducing barriers to health care access;
- Patient compliance with treatment plans;
- Health outcomes through timely disease detection and treatment options; and
- Capacity and choice for outpatient ongoing treatment in underserved areas of the state.

For substance use disorders, telehealth can increase access to addiction treatment services by removing the barriers of geography and stigma. The chronic nature of the disease calls for new ways for clinicians to stay connected with patients over extended periods of time. The use of synchronous and asynchronous telehealth, *while adhering to clinical standards of care*, should be available to all health clinicians.

As new technologies develop and their uses expand in their applications related to health care, policies must ensure that no disease space, no clinician type, and no patient be left behind. We urge a favorable report on House Bill 448.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.