



BERNARD C. “JACK” YOUNG
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB1121

February 24, 2020

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 1121 – Maryland Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Registry and Referral System

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and members of the committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1121.

Untreated and undertreated mental health conditions and substance use disorders (SUD) are prevalent throughout the United States and pose a significant public health threat on a local, national, and global level. More than one in four adults living with mental health concerns are also combatting substance use disorders across the United States.ⁱ In 2018, Maryland experienced 2,143 overdose deaths.ⁱⁱ A state-wide system that allows examination of substance use disorder and mental health patient data is needed for high risk patient identification and adequate surveillance.

The need for improved access to SUD treatment was addressed in the 2010 Affordable Care Act and is viewed as being a necessary health benefit. This is in compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008.ⁱⁱⁱ In order to manage and evaluate SUD and mental health conditions, a patient and resource registry can play a pivotal role in the evaluation and management of diseases and chronic conditions over time.^{iv}

SUD and mental health researchers have recognized that conditions within these areas can be managed effectively through collaborative efforts within our healthcare system^v. Currently, doctors have access to electronic medical records, test results, medications, and prescriptions^{vi}; however, a system in which the same providers can access information regarding

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/>*

SUD and mental health concerns does not exist in the state of Maryland. Without such a system, gaps between physical and behavioral health remain further perpetuating stigma and silos. In addition, our risk of undiagnosed and untreated SUD and mental health disorders increases exponentially, which poses a significant public health and financial burden on our health care system and state as a whole.

This bill offers a key opportunity to address and accurately monitor, evaluate, and improve efforts to address issues associated with mental health needs and SUD on a state-wide level. This bill will promote cross-sectoral collaboration and improve state-wide SUD and mental health surveillance and treatment efforts.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House bill 1121.

ⁱ “Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.” 2019. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed on February 24, 2020. <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for/mental-health-substance-use-disorders>

ⁱⁱ “Unintended Drug – and Alcohol Related Intoxication Deaths in Maryland.” 2018. Maryland Department of Health, 2018. Accessed on February 25,2020. https://bha.health.maryland.gov/Documents/Annual_2018_Drug_Intox_Report.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Ghitza UE, Tai B. Challenges and opportunities for integrating preventive substance-use-care services in primary care through the Affordable Care Act. J Health Care Poor Underserved. 2014;25(Suppl 1):36–45.

^{iv} McEvoy and Laxade. “Patient registries: a central component of the chronic care model.” March 2008. PubMed. Accessed on February 24,2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18557574>

^v Tai et al. “Patient registries for substance use disorder”. 2014. Dove Medical Press. Accessed on February 24, 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4114906/#b1-sar-5-081>

