



House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 26, 2020

House Bill 1121

Maryland Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Registry and Referral System

Support

NCADD-Maryland whole heartedly supports House Bill 1121. Finding the right services to meet one's behavioral health needs is not an easy task. Finding the most appropriate, affordable and accessible services and programs can take many hours, and sometimes ends with no good options. The proposal in HB 1121 to make sure the State maintains a list of services and updates it regularly is not difficult to execute and essential to save lives.

In the 21st century, it should take no more than a few minutes to get online, search for services in a geographic area needed that are targeted to the appropriate age group, and find a list of programs and services to contact. This is important for any kind of service we may be seeking for our loved ones, let alone mental health or substance use disorder services.

Further, we support the ability of health care providers to be able to use a system that allows for electronic referrals. Seamless transitions between levels of care are crucial to help people sustain their recovery. We also support the creation of an advisory committee that will help the system adapt to meet the changing needs of our communities.

People cannot get help, get well, and maintain recovery if they can't even figure out where to start. NCADD-Maryland is aware of the 2-1-1 resource that includes an online directory. Those utilizing the website have found the information to be incomplete and not inclusive of information about the ages of people served. Perhaps the 2-1-1 system could be the foundation on which this directory is built. We need to make finding services as easy as possible. It's smart public health policy.

We urge your support of House Bill 1121.

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.