



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 23, 2022

To: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 637- Health and Health Insurance – Behavioral Health Services – Expansion (Behavioral Health System Modernization Act)

Dear Chair Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 637.

Across the United States, one in six children are diagnosed with a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.<sup>1</sup> Many of these children lack access to services and resources they need. Maryland hospitals and other health care partners work tirelessly to deliver essential inpatient and outpatient care for Maryland youth.

SB 637 would improve the existing behavioral health care model in Maryland, with a particular focus on children and youth. This bill establishes 100 additional slots for children in the Mental Health Care Management Program and improves state programs to deliver high-fidelity wraparound services for youth. Additionally, SB 637 expands eligibility for families with commercial insurance and eligibility concerning children with substance use disorders. Hospitals across Maryland acknowledge the impact of the provisions in this bill and the beneficial influence on both somatic and behavioral health.

In 2020, Mental Health America ranked Maryland ninth in the country for treating mental illness in youth and offering access to mental health care.<sup>2</sup> With the help of SB 637, hospitals and health systems can collaborate to positively transform the behavioral health landscape for Maryland youth.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 637.

For more information, please contact:  
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<sup>1</sup> Cree RA, Bitsko RH, Robinson LR, Holbrook JR, Danielson ML, Smith DS, Kaminski JW, Kenney MK, Peacock G. Health care, family, and community factors associated with mental, behavioral, and developmental disorders and poverty among children aged 2–8 years — United States, 2016. *MMWR*, 2018;67(5):1377-1383.

<sup>2</sup> *Ranking the States*. Mental Health America. (n.d.). Retrieved Feb. 22, 2022, [www.mhanational.org/issues/rankingstates#youth\\_data](http://www.mhanational.org/issues/rankingstates#youth_data)