



February 3, 2022

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

RE: Support w/ Amendments – SB 282: Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences

Dear Chairman Kelley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support Senate Bill 282: Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (SB 282). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) include abuse that is physical, emotional, and/or sexual in nature; living with an alcohol or drug abuser; domestic violence; and emotional and physical neglect. Studies have consistently shown that those who experience ACEs have an increased prevalence of heart disease risk factors, the rate of antidepressant usage, and the likelihood of suicide and intravenous drug use. In each case, the effect size rose along with the number of ACEs. ACEs have also been correlated with physical illnesses. Thus, the findings of the workgroup on ACEs envisioned in SB 282 are vitally important.

MPS believes, however, that the members of the workgroup could be better defined. Specifically, either "behavioral health expert" or "mental health expert" should be amended to expressly include a child and adolescent psychiatrist. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are physicians who arguably have the greatest knowledge regarding the provision of care for this population and are often tasked with treating the traumatic symptoms that may occur as a result of ACEs.

MPS/WPS, therefore, respectfully asks the committee to add a child and adolescent psychiatrist to the group, replacing one of the undefined terms, "behavioral health expert" and "mental health expert", and then provide a favorable report to SB 282. 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 Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee