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February 21, 2022

Senator Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Finance Committee
Maryland Senate
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 637 Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, would like to offer its strong support for **Senate Bill 637 and ask you to report favorably on this legislation.**

SB 637 is critical to Maryland's families. There is a long-standing need for mental health services in Maryland's communities and SB 637 will allow for the provision of needed services.

SB 637 requires that every county in Maryland have access to Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCS). When consumers have access to treatment at Community Behavioral Health clinics then inpatient hospitalizations and emergency department utilizations decrease. SB 637 also allows for the use of data-driven outcomes measures which have proven to increase the effectiveness of community-based treatments. SB 637 also expands resources and support for peer support networks and certified peer recovery specialists. These services and programs have shown positive outcomes and to be an important factor in the recovery process. Finally, SB 637 requires that Medicaid and other health insurers reimburse for behavioral health crisis response services. This will reduce Maryland's reliance on law enforcement and emergency room departments for mental health emergencies.

For these and other reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on **Senate Bill 637.**

Please feel free to contact MPA's Executive Director Stefanie Reeves at exec@marylandpsychology.org if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Linda McGhee

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., JD
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs