



**Senate Bill 637 Health and Health Insurance - Behavioral Health Services - Expansion  
(Behavioral Health System Modernization Act)**

Finance Committee

February 23, 2022

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

The Brain Injury Association of Maryland is a 39-year-old organization providing education, advocacy, and research. One of our primary missions is to operate an information and assistance hotline as part of the no wrong door system for accessing long-term care services. We respond to over 300 calls per month from individuals, family members, and professionals seeking information and assistance to help people living with brain injury, many seeking behavioral health supports.

An estimated 120,000 Marylanders are living with the long-term cognitive, physical, and emotional changes as a result of a brain injury. A history of brain injury increases the risk of depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicide<sup>1</sup>. One study showed that even a mild brain injury increases the risk of mental health symptoms in the first 6 months after injury<sup>2</sup>. An estimated 2,876 Marylanders lost their lives to overdose between April 2020 and April 2021, a rate that ranked 7th highest in the country during that period.<sup>3</sup> Those who survived an overdose are now living with an anoxic or hypoxic brain injury. Ensuring that the behavioral health system in Maryland has the capacity and expertise to address the needs of people living with brain injury and co-occurring behavioral health conditions is critical.

SB 637 can help. This bill includes a variety of reforms and enhancements designed to meet the increasing demand for high quality mental health and substance use care. It will increase comprehensive community-based treatment by expanding Maryland's network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, improve health outcomes and treatment quality by increasing the use of measurement-based care in behavioral health and primary care settings, strengthen the behavioral health workforce by expanding resources for peers support networks and peer recovery specialists, improve care for children and youth by increasing the availability of home- and community-based wraparound services, and reduce reliance on law enforcement and emergency departments by ensuring stable reimbursement for crisis response services.

The demand for behavioral health care is at an all-time high. The enhancements in this bill are needed now more than ever. The Brain Injury Associations of Maryland requests that the Finance Committee give a favorable report to SB637

Additional Resources:

[Treating Patients with Traumatic Brain Injury](#)-SAMHSA

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<sup>1</sup> [https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA\\_Digital\\_Download/PEP21-05-03-001.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP21-05-03-001.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Stein MB et al. Posttraumatic stress disorder and major depression after civilian mild traumatic brain injury: A TRACK-TBI study. JAMA Psychiatry. January 30, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Keating, Dan; Bernstein, Lenny. "100,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in 12 months during the pandemic." Washington Post, November 17, 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/11/17/overdose-deaths-pandemic-fentanyl/>