



February 23, 2022

Senate Bill 637

Health and Health Insurance – Behavioral Health Services – Expansion (Behavioral Health System Modernization Act)

Finance Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as the juvenile services population.

If passed, Senate Bill 637 would expand access to certain behavioral health care and supporting services to serve individuals experiencing a mental health or substance use emergency. This legislation requires Medicaid and other health insurers to reimburse for measurement-based care in behavioral healthcare setting, and it requires Medicaid to reimburse for specific treatments, including “family-centered treatment” allowing the underlying functions of a youth’s disruption within the home, school, and community to be addressed as well as prevented by authorizing the reimbursement of “functional family therapy” for high-risk youth.

These important services promote recovery, resilience, and wellness within individuals, their families, and their communities; supporting families experiencing difficulties associated with child abuse, neglect, juvenile delinquency, child or parental developmental disabilities, or mental health concerns. Family Centered Treatment may be appropriate for families that are experiencing a child re-entering the family home from residential placement, potential removal of children from the home, multiple children in multiple placements, a history of poor outcomes from prior mental health services, or a child who is a juvenile offender who has required residential placement or crisis services.

Senate Bill 637 will improve care for children and youth by increasing the availability of home and community based wraparound services, keeping youth with intensive behavioral health needs in their homes and out of the hospital.

It is for these aforementioned reasons, that we politely ask for a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 637. Thank you.

For more information call or email:

Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com