



## **HB 766– Children - Residential Treatment Centers - Education Funding**

### **FAVORABLE**

Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Ways & Means Committee

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 45,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland provides education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

HB 766 would authorize core service agencies, local behavioral health authorities, and local addiction authorities to approve funding for a child's/youth's educational costs incurred during admission to residential treatment centers for medical or psychiatric services.

Sometimes children who are experiencing severe symptoms with their mental health condition may need a higher level of care than outpatient programs can provide. They may require services that require observation and structured activities around the clock, which they are unable to receive living at home. Residential treatment facilities are one way to meet these needs.

Usually, children requiring this level of care have repeatedly demonstrated behaviors that have been difficult to manage and proven unsafe to themselves or others. In a residential treatment facility, they can receive intense comprehensive treatment and the necessary structure and supervision to keep them safe. Residential facilities provide security and restricted access to ensure the safety of the child, staff and visitors. Children can remain in these programs for several months, with the ultimate goal of returning home and reuniting with their families.

Most programs have:

- Structured treatment plans and schedules that promote and reinforce healthy behavior
- Individual and group therapies
- Family involvement, including family therapy, which can increase the chances of a successful return to the home environment
- An academic component where children attend school either within the facility or nearby

Residential programs can be expensive, and frequently are not covered by private insurance or Medicaid. Keep in mind that most insurance companies that do cover costs of residential treatment, will only do so if the placement is deemed medically necessary.

**NAMI Maryland supports HB 766** because it considers the education of a child or youth in a residential treatment program and offers funding mechanisms to ensure that they are receiving an education while engaging with the program

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