



February 5, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Health & Government Operations Committee  
Room 241 - House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support - House Bill 48: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Collaborative Care Model Services – Implementation and Reimbursement Expansion

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk 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 who have 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 supports House Bill 48: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Collaborative Care Model Services – Implementation and Reimbursement Expansion (HB 48). Collaborative care is a patient-centered mental health treatment model involving a team of healthcare providers working together to provide comprehensive care for patients with mental health conditions. This team typically includes primary care physicians, mental health specialists, and care coordinators, who work together to provide a range of services, including assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care. The goal of collaborative care is to improve the quality of care for patients with mental health conditions and to better integrate mental health care into primary care settings. This is done by providing patients with access to a range of mental health services, including medication management, therapy, and case management, as well as by ensuring that patients receive appropriate care and support in a timely manner.

In collaborative care, a care manager or coordinator is typically assigned to each patient. This person acts as a liaison between the patient and the rest of the care team, ensuring that all members of the team are aware of the patient's needs and that the patient receives appropriate care promptly. The care manager also helps to ensure that the patient's care plan is regularly reviewed and updated and that the patient is provided with appropriate referrals to other services and resources as needed.



The model of collaborative care has been implemented in a variety of settings, including primary care clinics, community health centers, and mental health clinics. Studies have shown that it is effective in improving the quality of care for patients with mental health conditions, reducing symptoms, and reducing healthcare costs.<sup>1</sup> It also helps in reducing the burden on primary care physicians who may not have the expertise to manage complex mental health cases.

In summary, collaborative care is an evidence-based model of care for the treatment of mental health conditions. It has been shown to be effective in reducing symptoms, improving functioning, and reducing healthcare costs. It's considered a promising approach for addressing the mental health needs of patients in primary care settings. For all those reasons, MPS/WPS asks this committee for a favorable report on HB 48. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Joint Legislative Action Committee  
of the Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society

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<sup>1</sup> One review of studies of collaborative care for depression found that it was more effective than usual care in reducing symptoms of depression and improving functioning. Another review of studies of collaborative care for anxiety disorders found that it was more effective than usual care in reducing symptoms of anxiety and improving quality of life.

Several large randomized controlled trials have also been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative care. One study found that collaborative care was more effective than usual care in reducing symptoms of depression and improving functioning in older adults with depression. Another study found that collaborative care was more effective than usual care in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in primary care patients.