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Written Testimony

**House Bill 48 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Collaborative Care Model Services – Implementation and Reimbursement Expansion
 Health and Government Operations Committee – February 7, 2023**

Support

Background: House Bill 48 will improve the quality of behavioral health care delivered in primary care settings for Maryland Medicaid recipients by expanding their access to the proven Collaborative Care Model (CoCM).

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Jewish Community Services (JCS), which offers programs and services for people of all ages and backgrounds, helping them achieve their goals, enhance their wellbeing, and maximize their independence. JCS' experienced licensed clinical social workers, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatric providers currently provide therapy and medication management to a large population of clients with both commercial and public insurance. Over 180 of these clients have Medicaid (this is a subset of the total number of clients treated).

In addition to therapy and medication management services, JCS has implemented Patient Care Connection (PCC), a grant-funded model with many similarities to Collaborative Care. Through PCC, JCS currently serves 99 clients with the potential to serve many more. In anticipation of the grant termination, JCS is planning to transition the Medicare clients to a CoCM model to maintain continuity of care. Clients with Medicaid, however, may face termination if the legislature does not pass Senate Bill 101 expanding Medicaid coverage to CoCM. This outcome would be detrimental to current and future Medicaid clients who benefit greatly from these services.

CoCM is a patient-centered, evidence-based approach for integrating physical and behavioral health care in primary care settings. It has been validated in over 80 randomized controlled trials and shown to improve health outcomes and save money, mostly via a reduction in unnecessary hospitalization and higher intensity levels of care.

By integrating behavioral health care into primary care, patients consistently demonstrate improved mental health and compliance with medical regimens; therefore, yielding improved health outcomes, reducing unnecessary hospitalization or higher intensity levels of care, and saving healthcare costs. **For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB48.**

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.