

February 17, 2023

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

RE: Support – HB 418: Mental Health - Workforce Development - Fund Established

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Honorable Members of the Committees:

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 suffering from 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 support House Bill 418: Mental Health - Workforce Development - Fund Established. (HB 418). The importance of workforce development around mental health cannot be understated. Mental health workforce development is vitally important because it helps to ensure that people in need of mental health services receive high-quality, effective care. This involves training and supporting mental health professionals, so they have the skills and knowledge needed to diagnose and treat mental health conditions. A well-developed mental health workforce can improve access to care, reduce disparities in care, and lead to better health outcomes for individuals and communities. Additionally, investing in mental health workforce development can help to address workforce shortages, reduce burnout and turnover among mental health professionals, and promote career satisfaction and growth in the field.

MPW/WPS would like to note for the committees that the commitment to becoming a psychiatrist takes an extremely long time to obtain and that psychiatrists' training is capped due to a limited number of graduate medical education (GME) slots. In the end-of-year package this past year, Congress funded 200 new GME slots, with 100 being designated for psychiatry, but states will still need to invest in expanding residency and fellowships to meet their mental health needs. HB 418 is a meaningful step in that direction.

For the reasons stated above, MPS/WPS ask this committee for a favorable report on HB 418. 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 Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee