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February 17, 2023

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Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 418 – Mental Health – Workforce Development – Fund Established
Position: Support

Dear Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, is writing in **SUPPORT** of **House Bill 418 – Mental Health – Workforce Development – Fund Established**, which will help Maryland to address growing inequities in the availability of mental health professionals in both inner-city and rural parts of the state.

This bill addresses several critical points in increasing and diversifying the Maryland mental health workforce.

1. Individuals often best positioned to understand the mental health needs of diverse communities are themselves disadvantaged by inadequate funds for education and training.
2. The preference for serving a minority community is often eliminated because of the combination of student loan debt and low salaries in such community treatment centers. The same combination leads to poor workforce retention in those settings because of the higher salaries available in wealthier communities and facilities.
3. Certification in the most effective evidence-based treatments is costly and often beyond the means of individuals, which disproportionately affects those serving minority communities and prevents access to quality treatment.

Despite many highly motivated individuals who want to be part of the mental health workforce, the above factors serve to educate, train, and steer a much smaller number, into primarily the better resourced settings, leaving out both inner city and rural Maryland communities. **House Bill 418** recognizes that without funds, it is difficult to alter these determining factors. For these reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on **House Bill 418**.

Thank you for considering our comments on **House Bill 418**. If we can be of any further assistance as the Health and Government Operations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.
Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs