



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

To the House Health and Government Operations Committee

Chair: Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk

February 21, 2023

***House Bill 322: Public Health - Home- and Community-Based Services for Children and Youth***

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 322, Public Health - Home- and Community-Based Services for Children and Youth.

MRHA believes that all Maryland youth deserve access to affordable and convenient mental and behavioral health services. In Maryland, the percentage of children between 3 and 17 that experienced either anxiety or depression increased 36% from 2016 to 2020.<sup>1</sup> Of all Maryland youth that experienced at least one major depressive episode in the last year, 44.7% did not receive care.<sup>2</sup>

By supporting this bill, and expanding access to mental and behavioral health services, all youth can live their healthiest lives.

*Sincerely,*

*Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director*

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1. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2022). (rep.). 2022 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK STATE TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING. Retrieved February 6, 2023, from <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatatobook-2022.pdf>.

2. Reinert, M, Fritze, D. & Nguyen, T. (October 2021). "The State of Mental Health in America 2022" Mental Health America, Alexandria VA.