



**House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 21, 2023**

**House Bill 418
Mental Health - Workforce Development - Fund Established
Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 418 to establish a workgroup and a fund to address the workforce shortage that exists among professionals in the mental health and substance use disorder treatment fields. We commend the sponsor to taking such a thoughtful approach to this issue by creating a workgroup of appropriate stakeholders to thoroughly examine the gaps in the workforce, and recommend policy and funding changes that can break down the barriers that prevent more from entering these health care fields.

Substance use disorder treatment providers experience staff shortages constantly. Positions stay open for long periods of time, turnover is high, and salaries continue to climb as a result. These things increase the struggle of community-based programs to survive financially, and provide services to all who need it.

There are statistics about shortages in specific professions, but this bill proposes something much more comprehensive, looking at the range of clinicians and non-clinicians that provide the full range of services people in substance use and mental health treatment programs receive. We ask that there be a small amendment to clarify that the behavioral health workforce includes both those in the mental health and substance use disorder fields.

With this change, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 418.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.