



***Brightening Tomorrow, Today***

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**Subject: House Bill 1136**

Lighthouse, Inc., strongly supports House Bill 1136 which will provide funding for Youth Services Bureaus (YSB). Lighthouse, Inc., has been serving the community for 50 years and, since the 1970s, has served as a youth services bureau (YSB). For the last several decades, Lighthouse has been delivering mental health services, in particular family counseling services, to assist youth and their families in southwest Baltimore County. There was a time when Lighthouse, Inc., was one of several YSBs serving communities in Baltimore County; today, we are the only YSB in the county. The return of YSB funding to the Youth Services Bureaus would be vital in both strengthening Lighthouse's position in delivering vital family counseling services and potentially re-establishing other YSB services elsewhere in Baltimore County.

Lighthouse's focus on preventative family counseling services is a fundamental pillar in addressing youth mental health needs and juvenile crime concerns of the county. Lighthouse offers services that address contributing factors such as depression, anxiety, and trauma. Our approach focuses on the family system, rather than on the child alone, to ensure that a child will be supported after counseling ends.

For fiscal-year 2023, we are proud to say that, for 125 cases handled by Lighthouse (representing over 300 clients in individual or family counseling), 92% of youth clients met at least one of their treatment goals, 100% of our youth clients did not require any out-of-home placement, and 100% of youth, in a 2-year follow-up from 2021, had not come to the attention of the Department of Juvenile Services post-treatment.

The funding this bill provides would increase the preventative services so very needed to address growing youth mental health needs in Baltimore County and beyond. These services are shown to be effective in improving the overall health of our youth and in keeping them out of the criminal justice system.

We respectfully request that you support the funding of Youth Services Bureaus by voting in favor of this legislation.

Lorraine Eakin  
Board Chair

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