



**Senate Bill 212 Behavioral Health Advisory Council and Commission on Behavioral Health  
Care Treatment and Access - Alterations**

Senate Finance Committee

January 30, 2024

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

Totally Linking Care MD (TLC-MD) is a nonprofit coalition of 6 hospitals that connects healthcare providers and programs with residents in Southern Maryland (Calvert County, Charles County, Prince George's County, and St. Mary's County). We believe that everyone deserves access to quality healthcare.

We build innovative health programs through grant funding and sustain them through public/private partnerships. Our goal is to simplify how residents access healthcare, one program at a time, to help them become the healthiest version of them self. We do this by breaking down barriers to health care services and building bridges between hospitals, healthcare professionals, faith-based organizations, and, most importantly, the residents of our community.

SB 212, with an amendment extending the deadline to July 1, 2025, to allow sufficient time to address all issues, will improve the financial structure and quality of oversight necessary to integrate somatic and behavioral health services in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program.

Integrating somatic and behavioral health services is crucial for providing comprehensive and effective healthcare. Tasking the Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access with making recommendations is an effective approach.

Approving Bill 212 will allow the necessary coordination needed to provide recommendations regarding the financial structure and quality oversight that will allow positive impact regarding holistic patient care, efficient resource utilization, improved patient engagement, reduced stigma, preventative care and early intervention, financial sustainability, quality oversight, and workforce training and collaboration.

Recommendations regarding the financial structure and quality oversight are essential for fostering an integrated care approach that enhances patient outcomes, improves efficiency, and addresses both physical and mental health needs comprehensively.

Senate Bill 212, with the proposed amendment, is important to Totally Linking Care in Maryland (TLC-MD) because supporting Maryland residents with gaining access to all forms of health care is our goal. TLC-MD is currently supporting the crisis system of southern Maryland. Our organization focuses on somatic and behavioral health needs for Maryland residents. TLC-MD is



Health equity for a healthier Southern MD

supporting this bill because integrating somatic and behavioral health services promotes a patient-centered, holistic approach to healthcare, yielding positive outcomes for individuals and the healthcare system as a whole. **For these reasons, Totally Linking Care in Maryland urges this committee to pass SB 212, with the proposed amendment.**

Sincerely,

*Margaret Fowler*

**Margaret Fowler  
Executive Director**