



Testimony
SB888 Health- Local Behavioral Health Authorities and Oversight of Behavioral Health Programs
Position: Support
MARCH 12, 2024

Chair Hayes and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Greater Baybrook Alliance urges your support of Local Behavioral Health Authorities and Oversight of Behavioral Health Programs.

Greater Baybrook Alliance (GBA) is a community development organization that acts as a catalyst and conduit for equitable development and reinvestment in the Brooklyn, Brooklyn Park, and Curtis Bay neighborhoods. GBA implements a robust community engagement practice that fosters collective efficacy amongst residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders to drive neighborhood revitalization activities.

Behavioral health clinics are disproportionately present in the Brooklyn, Brooklyn Park, and Curtis Bay communities. Some of these clinics provide needed services to our residents, including peer or one-on-one counseling, medication-assisted treatment, and other behavioral health approaches.

However, many facilities do not appear to be providing services to the local community. We do not observe patients receiving treatment; others do not maintain the public realm spaces in front of their properties, allowing loitering, trash, and ultimately crime to fester. Most importantly, our communities suffers from an over-saturation of these facilities in one small neighborhood - we have many more behavioral health clinics than serves our local residents.

We strongly recommend increasing oversight by Local Behavioral Health Authorities to ensure that poorer and disenfranchised communities do not bear the burden of lax enforcement. We strongly suggest increased collaboration between Local Behavioral Health Authorities and community based organizations, including education about regulations and code enforcement, free flow of information, documentation code violations, and opportunities for community input.

Please support appropriate oversight of Behavioral Health Programs in our state.

Meredith Chaiken
Executive Director