

inseparable

409 7th St Northwest, Suite 305
Washington, D.C. 20004
March 6, 2024

Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB1040—Maryland Medicaid Assistance Program—Limited Behavioral Health Services

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Inseparable, a national nonprofit focused on closing the treatment gap for people with mental health conditions, improving crisis response, and supporting youth mental health, I am writing to urge your strong support of HB1040. This legislation will allow children covered by Medicaid to receive certain mental health services regardless of whether they have a formal mental health diagnosis. HB1040 takes a commonsense, yet transformative, step that will reduce stigma and improve access to care for children.

Youth mental health concerns—from difficulties adjusting to a new sibling, experiencing anxiety, or coping with a death or a trauma—are common. A child can struggle and experience poor mental health without meeting the criteria for a formal mental health disorder. Requiring a diagnosis to bill for mental health services creates barriers to children getting the very help that could prevent a diagnosable condition or the need for more intensive services. Recognizing this conundrum, California and Colorado allow limited Medicaid mental health services for children and youth without a diagnosis. Maryland should do the same. Doing so will not change who is eligible for Medicaid or expand benefits; instead, it simply eases access to early intervention.

HB1040, the “no diagnosis” bill, is a smart approach that breaks down the barriers that both clinicians and families face when a formal diagnosis is required in order to provide children the help they need. Simply put, it will promote prevention and improve outcomes, reduce crises, and minimize costs. Inseparable is grateful to Delegate Woods for introducing HB1040 and to Delegates Woods, Alston, Martinez, Taveras, and White Holland, members of the Committee, for their co-sponsorship. We respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1040 and continue Maryland’s national leadership in supporting children’s mental health.

Respectfully,



Angela Kimball
Chief Advocacy Officer