



**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Secretary**

**WES MOORE
GOVERNOR**

**ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR**

**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

February 12, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 408 - Mental Health Law - County Mental Health Advisory Committees - Membership

Dear Chairwoman Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs supports HB 408 - Mental Health Law - County Mental Health Advisory Committees - Membership. The MDVA believes it is vital to add a member to the county mental health advisory committees who have experience with mental health care for veterans or is a member of the military.

The Moore-Miller Administration reaffirmed its commitment to Maryland's participation in the nation's Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families in November 2023. Adding a veteran or member of the military to these committees will help support this prevention effort, impact grassroots-level change, and improve the overall well-being of our military and veteran-connected community.

I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on HB 408, to add a necessary perspective to county mental health advisory committees. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary

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