



Maryland Community Health System

Committee:	House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill:	House Bill 1040 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Limited Behavioral Health Services
Hearing Date:	March 6, 2024
Position:	Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 1040 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Limited Behavioral Health Services*. This bill provides coverage for children under the age of 18 years of age for limited behavioral health services without having a behavioral health diagnosis under the Medicaid program.

As a network of federally qualified health centers, we provide somatic, behavioral, and oral health services to underserved communities. With rising rates of behavioral health issues among children, we are supportive of measures to lift barriers to care. Many of our patients are covered through Medicaid. To receive coverage of behavioral health services, their providers need to render a behavioral health diagnosis within the first three appointments. For clinicians, it can take more than three visits with a young child to render an accurate behavioral health visit. This bill would give these clinicians the flexibility to ensure that they have spent sufficient time with the young children and their family to issue a diagnosis rather than having to rush to render a provisional diagnosis.

Intervening early with young children can prevent much more serious behavioral health issues when these children are older and can also ensure that they are better equipped to perform well in school. We strongly urge a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.