



February 19, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building – Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – House Bill 548: Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS/WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

Clinical treatments should only be determined by scientific evidence in accordance with applicable regulatory standards. Currently, inadequate scientific evidence exists for endorsing the use of psychedelics to treat any psychiatric disorder except within the context of approved investigational studies. MPS/WPS support continued research and therapeutic discovery into psychedelic agents with the same scientific integrity and regulatory standards applied to other promising therapies in medicine.

MPS/WPS also support with amendment House Bill 548: Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances (HB 548) because promising preliminary research involving psychedelics for the treatment of serious and disabling conditions such as treatment-resistant depression and posttraumatic stress disorder have stimulated growing interest in the therapeutic potential of these agents. The use of psychedelics, however, can pose short-term and long-term risks, including hallucinogen use disorder and other mental health-related risks. Thus, given growing public interest and commercial interest, and the ever-compelling need to advance treatments for challenging psychiatric conditions, MPS/WPS fear the risk that the use of psychedelics for purported clinical goals may outpace evidence-based research and regulatory approval.

Therefore, MPS/WPS would kindly ask that a psychiatrist be added to the task force as we are the clinicians most actively monitoring this issue, conducting scientific studies, and treating patients who use and or abuse psychedelics. The amendment reads as follows:



On page 2, in line 16 strike beginning with “individual” through “health” and substitute “**psychiatrist**”

For all the reasons above and with the above-referenced amendment, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 548. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee