



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 15, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 163 – Health – General Article – References to Mental Health – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill 163 (SB 163) titled “Health – General Article – References to Mental Health.”

SB 163 removes existing references to “mental hygiene” throughout Health General and replaces them with the more inclusive term “mental health.” Additionally, this bill requires regulatory changes for any MDH regulations which still utilize the phrase “mental hygiene” by October 1, 2026. Because there are many areas throughout MDH’s regulations that still utilize this terminology, amended regulations will need to be drafted, proposed, and adopted in accordance with this bill.

MDH is supportive of the use of more inclusive and equitable language throughout its regulations. However, given the scope of the usage of the term throughout MDH’s regulations and the efforts required to update the terminology, MDH respectfully requests an amendment to extend the time to implement the regulatory changes to July 1, 2027. MDH does also note a minor fiscal impact of this bill which will require one additional staff member (Grade 18 Health Policy Analyst II at \$96,930) for the Office of Regulation and Policy Coordination to implement the requirements of this bill.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary