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February 4, 2025

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

### **RE: HB 0665 Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits**

### **Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Senate Finance Committee to **FAVORABLY report on HB 665.**

Mental health and substance abuse are just as critical to overall well-being as physical health, yet they remain underdiagnosed and undertreated. Requiring insurance companies to cover annual mental health and substance abuse screenings—just as they do for physical exams—would lead to early detection, timely intervention, and reduced long-term healthcare costs. Untreated mental health and substance use disorders contribute to increased emergency room visits, lost productivity, and higher rates of disability, placing a significant burden on individuals, families, and the healthcare system. By ensuring preventive coverage, we can promote early care, reduce stigma, and improve public health outcomes, ultimately creating a healthier, more productive society.

We urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB 665.** If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D. at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

*David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.*  
David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.  
President

*Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.*  
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs