



Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 21st, 2025

**Bill: House Bill 0689 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Use of Reimbursement Funds by Schools Position:**

**Support**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA) - which represents about 500 Maryland school psychologists - strongly supports House Bill 0689. The proposed legislation directs funds for which school-based professionals such as school psychologists and speech and language pathologists bill Medicaid towards efforts that reduce shortages in those fields. MSPA appreciates Maryland's delicate fiscal situation, so it applauds ideas for novel funding sources for programs enacted to reduce the staffing shortfalls.

Because of the shortages, students do not receive needed and sometimes legally mandated services delivered by school-based providers. For example, a mental health crisis currently affects Maryland's children, youth, and young adults.<sup>1</sup> To prevent and address such devastating threats to students' well-being and development, the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) recommends a continuum of supports originating in schools and continuing into community-based institutions.<sup>2</sup> School psychologists' unique training in both education and mental health assessment and intervention enables them to play a vital role connecting school and community-based elements of this continuum. However, the shortage prevents school psychologists from performing school-based prevention and intervention activities envisioned by the NCSMH. As a result, students' mental health challenges remain unaddressed until those problems become severe enough to warrant treatment by community-based providers or even assessment for a legally defined disabling condition. Tremendous damage and suffering therefore occurs before students can access those supports.

Unfortunately, Maryland falls far short of the National Association of School Psychologists' recommendation that schools employ 1 school psychologist for every 500 students. Moreover, Maryland falls behind states like New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware in the number of school psychologists employed per student as well. New Hampshire employs 1 school psychologist for every 712 students, Massachusetts employs 1 school psychologist for every 662 students, New York employs 1 school psychologist for every 545 students, New Jersey employs 1 school psychologist for every 660 students, and Delaware employs 1 school psychologist for every 815 students. Maryland, in contrast, employs 1 school psychologist for every 1053 students.<sup>3</sup>

MSPA therefore supports all legislation drafted to address the shortage. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at [legislative@mspaonline.org](mailto:legislative@mspaonline.org) or Sarah Peters at [speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:speters@hbstrategies.us) or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

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Co-Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

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<sup>1</sup>2024. AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in->

child-and-adolescent-mental-health/

<sup>2</sup> 2024. National Center for School Mental Health. University of Maryland School of Medicine. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/resources/foundations-of-school-mental-health/>

<sup>3</sup>2024. National Association of School Psychologists State Shortages Dashboard. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/state-shortages-data-dashboard>

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