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Testimony on SB 444 Certificate of Need - Intermediate Health Care Facilities

Senate Finance Committee

February 17, 2026

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland (CBH) is the leading voice for community-based providers serving the mental health and addiction needs of vulnerable Marylanders. Our 95 members serve the majority of those who access care through the public behavioral health system. CBH members provide outpatient and residential treatment for mental health and addiction-related disorders, day programs, case management, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), employment supports, and crisis intervention.

CBH represents about 20% of the licensed residential substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programs subject to certificate of need (CON) regulation by the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC). On behalf of our members, we are pleased to support SB 444.

We believe that this bill balances oversight by the MHCC on the development and expansion of residential SUD treatment capacity with a lower administrative burden than the full CON process would require. New and existing providers will be held to the same high-quality standards, while receiving expedited review, allowing this level of care to reach the communities who need it more efficiently. This oversight model streamlines the review process, creating a single regulatory framework for all providers and reducing burden across the board, without sacrificing quality.

We appreciate the MHCC's proactive approach to regulation in this instance, as well as their recognition of the burden that a full CON process could impose on small providers. We think the bill seeks a balanced approach. MHCC's positive history of engaging with the providers it regulates and addressing their concerns also increases our confidence in this approach.

For these reasons, CBH is pleased to support SB 444 and urges your support as well. We look forward to working with the Maryland Health Care Commission to ensure the future of high-quality behavioral health services in Maryland.

For more information contact Sara Hairgrove at Sara@MDCBH.org.