

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 13, 2026

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The Honorable Heather Bagnall
Health Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support House Bill 746: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Collaborative Care Model - Cost Sharing Prohibition

Dear Chairwoman Bagnall & 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 1200 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 746: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Collaborative Care Model - Cost Sharing Prohibition. Collaborative care is a model to treat people with common mental health conditions in medical settings, mostly primary care. Most patients with mental health problems (such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and alcohol and substance) talk to their primary care physicians (PCP) first, but PCPs often have multiple demands and do not always have the capacity to treat these disorders, especially given their shorter time they have with patients and the multiple health conditions they need to diagnose and/or treat. Collaborative care allows experts to collaborate with PCP to serve these patients, rather than referring them outside of the primary care setting, which can involve delays and expensive care. In collaborative care, a behavioral health care manager practices in the primary care clinic. The care manager is a mental health professional who works with the PCP and the consulting psychiatrist. The consulting psychiatrist provides expertise and support for the PCP, and treatment for patients in cases that need more specialized support.

Collaborative care is timely, effective, affordable, less costly for healthcare settings, and less stigmatizing as it allows access to psychiatric services within the primary care setting. Collaborative care is being used across the country and is now reimbursable. It also uses a registry to keep track of the patients served and to pay close attention to who needs more help and has proven to be more effective than usual care in over 80 randomized clinical trials. It also increases patient satisfaction.

HB746: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Collaborative Care Model includes language prohibiting certain agencies and insurers from imposing "A COPAYMENT, 5 COINSURANCE, OR DEDUCTIBLE REQUIREMENT ON COVERAGE FOR SERVICES PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COLLABORATIVE CARE MODEL," which would encourage the utilization of collaborative care. As such, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 746.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society & Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee