



**2026 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 772 - Workgroup on Behavioral Health Rate Methodology Modernization – Establishment
COMMITTEE: House – Health Committee
POSITION: Letter of Support With Amendments
BILL ANALYSIS: HB 772 establishes a Workgroup on Behavioral Health Rate Methodology Modernization in the Maryland Health Care Commission to develop reimbursement methodologies for community behavioral health clinics and outpatient mental health centers. The bill also requires the Workgroup to report its findings to the Governor and General Assembly by October 1, 2027.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) provides this Letter of Support with Amendments for HB 772. The bill’s provisions to establish a Workgroup to develop cost-based, rate-setting methodologies for certified community behavioral health clinics (CCBHCs) and Outpatient Mental Health Centers (OMHCs) would constitute an important first step to directly address long-standing structural challenges that threaten access to essential behavioral health services across MD.

OMHCs provide critical services in communities throughout the state, including counseling, medication management for individuals with serious mental illness, treatment for substance use disorders, school-based services for children in crisis, and more. OMHCs offer trusted, community-based care that enables individuals to receive treatment close to home, a vital function in underserved areas where access barriers persist.

Despite their essential role, OMHCs are facing a growing crisis. Reimbursement rates have not kept pace with rising salaries, benefits, and operating costs, placing significant financial strain on providers and leading to closures, including the loss of an OMHC in Frederick County last year. At the same time, outdated regulatory and reimbursement frameworks limit operational flexibility and fail to reflect current clinical practice or workforce realities. HB 772 would facilitate essential analysis and evaluation of Maryland’s current system, exploration of models in other states, and development of an updated regulatory framework and reimbursement methodology to strengthen the state’s behavioral health system. Many local health departments serve as OMHCs in their communities, and MACHO welcomes the opportunity for LHD representation on the Workgroup. To that end, MACHO recommends the following amendments:

For Page 2, lines 10-11, amend the text as follows:

(7) ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM A LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT; AND

~~(7)~~**(8)**

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this Letter of Support with Amendments for HB 772. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at рмаiorа1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*