



*MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.*

## **HB 746 SUPPORT**

Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Collaborative Care Model  
- Cost Sharing Prohibition

Health Committee      Hearing: February 19, 2026

**Unfortunately, existing cost sharing requirements for collaborative services undermine the program's effectiveness. With cost sharing in place, patients are typically not returning for follow-up visits.** Patients in need of these services are particularly likely to be experiencing financial challenges.

Mental health and substance use disorders cannot be effectively treated with a single visit. Follow-up visits are crucial.

**Most mental health and substance use disorders are recognized and treated in the primary care setting**, where treatment is less effective than that provided by specialists. Primary care providers can quickly learn best practices from specialists through collaborating in the care of existing patients. **This is an efficient way to extend the reach of specialists, reducing barriers to treatment. The skill and interest of the primary care provider improves as well.**

**Many patients who are unable to complete a referral to a specialist can conveniently access co-located care.**

The acute shortage of buprenorphine prescribers can be addressed with collaborative care, helping primary care providers become more comfortable and willing to become buprenorphine prescribers, the lack of which limits our ability to address opioid addiction and overdose deaths.

**Mental health and substance use disorders are known to be major drivers of healthcare costs; they are strongly association with chronic somatic disease.**

**As a former primary care physician, I can attest that we work primarily in isolation. Primary care providers want to learn more about these disorders. There is no a substitute for case-based learning from a specialist.**

Respectfully,  
Joseph Adams, MD, FASAM, addiction medicine, internal medicine;  
Co-Chair, MDDCSAM Public Policy Committee