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Testimony on House Bill 772:

Workgroup on Behavioral Health Rate Methodology Modernization - Establishment

House Health Committee

February 25, 2026

POSITION: FAVORABLE

My name is Kim Morrill, LCSW-C, HCM and I am the CEO at Aspire Wellness Center, a community-based behavioral health provider serving all of Maryland, located in Baltimore County.

Aspire Wellness Center strongly supports HB772 because it strengthens Maryland's rate study process by ensuring independence, transparency, and meaningful provider participation. It improves the process. It does not mandate automatic rate increases. It ensures that rate-setting is clear, data-informed, and grounded in operational reality.

At Aspire Wellness Center, we serve approximately 3000 individuals each year through individual, family, couples counseling, medication management, Intensive Outpatient services and Psychiatric rehabilitation services for adults and minors. We are experiencing real operational strain.

It has been very difficult to hire therapists to keep up with the community demands. We have had positions posted for over two months before getting any inquiries. On the job boards you can see, almost every agency is hiring for the same pool of candidates. This creates waitlist, especially for evening sessions and children/adolescents that need to be seen after school hours. Currently, despite seeing more clients than last year, we are bringing in less money due to clients losing Medicaid eligibility and having to pay more for employees to remain competitive with other agencies.

Current reimbursement does not reflect the full cost of delivering care. We have absorbed increased costs related to supervision, compliance, documentation, and reporting. These requirements are necessary, but they depend on staffing and infrastructure that are not accounted for in the current rates.

Providers delivering care every day should have a formal role in informing how rates are studied and developed. HB772 ensures that providers have a seat at the table so that the methodology reflects the actual cost of delivering services in Maryland communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB772.

Sincerely,

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