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Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee February 13, 2020

Senate Bill 402 Health Care Practitioners - Telehealth

Support

The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) supports Senate Bill 402. MATOD believes that the appropriate use of technology in the delivery of somatic and behavioral health care should be utilized to its fullest potential. Telehealth is an important part of the behavioral health care delivery system that leads to success in reaching those who might not otherwise engage in the behavioral health care system.

Engaging patients in need of substance use disorders (SUD) treatment can often be difficult. MATOD believes that telehealth can increase access to addiction treatment services by removing the barriers of geography and stigma. The chronic nature of the disease calls for new ways for clinicians to stay connected with patients over extended periods of time. The use of telehealth is a valuable tool in the engagement and treatment of those with SUD. Telehealth can be used to address relapse issues and can keep patients engaged in the treatment process by increasing the amount of contact between the provider and the patient.

MATOD firmly supports the use of synchronous and asynchronous telehealth, and believes it should be available to all health care clinicians; somatic and behavioral.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 402.

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.