



SB 1000/HB 1300 – The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future

**Senate Budget and Taxation and Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
Committees**

House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committee

February 17, 2020

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for someone with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience as parents, caregivers and other loved ones, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to parents and caregivers of young people with mental health issues and to any loved one who cares for someone with a substance use or gambling issue.

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- 1 in 5 children experience a diagnosable mental health disorder in any given year
 - One-half of all mental health disorders develop in youth before the age of 14
 - Three-quarters of all mental health disorders develop before the age of 24

There is a profound need for behavioral health treatment among children and adolescents, but it is estimated that less than 20% of children with behavioral health disorders receive treatment. Untreated behavioral health disorders in children and youth lead to many poor outcomes, including school failure.

Recognizing the strong link between a student’s behavioral health and their ability to be successful in school, SB 1000/HB 1300 makes a number of recommendations to support the behavioral health of students, including teacher training to identify behavioral health problems in students, universal screening, referral to behavioral health services, and the provision of school-based behavioral health services.

We know that families often don’t know when their child is experiencing a behavioral health problem. They may know that something is wrong, but they don’t recognize the problem as related to behavioral health. Schools are in the best position to identify behavioral health problems in students and work with the family to help them get the services their child needs. In some cases, even after a behavioral health problem has been identified, families are unable to access needed services – transportation issues, the inability to take leave from work, or the needs of other children prevent them from taking their child to appointments. For this reason, the provision of school-based behavioral health services in schools can be a key component to a child’s success.

In order to continue to show the positive outcome that result from the provision of community-partnered school-based behavioral health services and to expand programs,

a uniform outcomes measurement system must be developed and implemented across jurisdictions. Data should be evaluated and reported on to the General Assembly.

Funding is needed to implement the behavioral health recommendations in SB 1000/HB 1300. Existing resources are not enough to successfully carry out these initiatives. For this reason, we ask that the recommendations related to behavioral health be funded at a sufficient level.

We urge a favorable report on SB 1000/HB 1300 with amendments.

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