



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: SB 896 – Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment
– Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill 896 (SB 896) – Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment.

The bill creates a Commission to study and revise guidelines for student behavioral health and general mental health treatment and practices. Additionally, SB 896 requires the Secretary of Health to choose one representative from the Maryland Mental Health Association as a designee to staff the Commission. Specifying one “mental health” organization not only shrinks the pool of candidates to fill the seat, but also hinders the Secretary’s authority to appoint the best “behavioral health” expert for the role.

The Department has been working with the Lieutenant Governor who has been leading the Commission to Study Mental and Behavioral Health in Maryland (Commission) under Executive Order 01.01.2019.06. This Commission also has a subcommittee on youth and families. Creating a new commission is duplicative of the Commission’s existing subcommittee and its work. More information can be found here: <https://governor.maryland.gov/ltgovernor/commission-to-study-mental-and-behavioral-health-in-maryland/>

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Director of Governmental Affairs Webster Ye at (410) 260-3190 or webster.ye@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Neall
Secretary