



February 18, 2020

**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION**

SB 520 Behavioral Health Programs - Opioid Treatment Services - Limitation on Licenses

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving nearly 75,000 people with behavioral health service needs.

BHSB opposes SB 520 Behavioral Health Programs - Opioid Treatment Services - Limitation on Licenses.

SB 520 limits the Behavioral Health Administration from issuing more than five licenses per 100,000 people in a county for an opioid treatment programs (OTP). At the request of Finance Committee leadership, the Attorney General of Maryland reviewed SB 520 to assess whether it would violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and found that this bill does, in fact, violate the ADA.

In addition to violating ADA, SB 520 would limit access to opioid treatment services at a time when Baltimore City needs to do more to increase access to this type of treatment modality. In 2017, BHSB conducted an analysis understand the capacity of substance related disorder (SRD) treatment in Baltimore City, with a focus on findings for opioid treatment programs (OTPs) and Buprenorphine providers. The analysis found that over 24,000 people in Baltimore City have an opioid use disorder however, our system has the capacity to serve 17,000 people. This gap in services, leaves nearly 7,300 people without access to opioid treatment services. SB 520 would limit access to opioid treatment services at a time when the overdose crisis has seen no relief in Baltimore City.

Because SB 520 violates ADA and we need to do more to increase access to opioid treatment services in Baltimore City, **BHSB urges the Senate Finance Committee to oppose SB 521.**