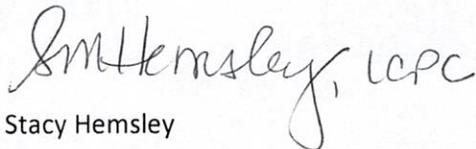


February 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

As a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor who attempts to locate inpatient psychiatric placement for patients who present to the emergency department in an acute mental health crisis I have witnessed significant delays based on the lack of inpatient beds and psychiatrists in Maryland. This is particularly challenging in the case of involuntary patients when a psychiatrist isn't available to perform the initial psychiatric evaluation within the first 24 hours of admission as current regulations dictate. These delays result in a lack of resources for all patients in need of emergency treatment and can be alleviated by allowing psychiatric nurse practitioners to perform the initial psychiatric evaluation and testify at hearing on behalf of their patients. The Maryland Board of Nursing indicates psychiatric nurse practitioners are educated, licensed and capable of performing the initial psychiatric evaluation on involuntary patients as they currently do on voluntary patients. As a means to reduce emergency department boarding and increase access to care I ask you vote in favor of HB 317 and SB 541.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Stacy Hemsley, LCPC in cursive script.

Stacy Hemsley