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House Bill 317
Senate Bill 541

February 4, 2020

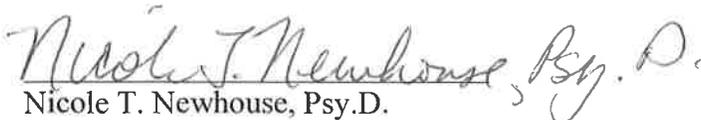
Greetings,

I am writing to request that you please vote favorably on House Bill 317 and Senate Bill 541 to avoid delays in care for patients who require involuntary mental health hospitalization.

House Bill 317 and Senate Bill 541 support the addition of psychiatric nurse practitioners as professionals qualified to perform the initial psychiatric examination which is required within 24 hours of an involuntary admission on an inpatient psychiatric unit. The initial psychiatric evaluation is the same psychiatric history and physical exam that psychiatric nurse practitioners perform on voluntary patients. The Maryland Board of Nursing supports this as within the scope of practice for psychiatric nurse practitioners. These bills also allow psychiatric nurse practitioners to provide testimony about the patients they have cared for at involuntary hearings which ensures pertinent details are not missed, to avoid severely ill patients being released prematurely.

As a psychologist on the Eastern Shore of Maryland I am very aware of the shortage of mental health services in rural areas which often results in deficiencies or delays in treatment and believe these bills will serve to improve access to much needed care. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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Licensed Psychologist
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