



February 26, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Oppose – HB 782: Health – Mental and Emotional Disorders – Consent (Mental Health Access Initiative)

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS opposes House Bill 782 (HB 782) over concerns about minor children not being able to consent to medication. Psychiatrists have increasingly come to rely on psychoactive medications in the treatment of both adults and children. Drug therapy is now regarded as one of the most useful and important forms of treatment available for mental illness. The medical standard of care in child psychiatry, however, is to obtain parental or guardian consent prior to treatment with psychotropic medication. MPS believes that HB 782 unintentionally lowers the standard of care for children since these medications can have long term physical consequences that children are not capable of understanding.

For these reasons, MPS respectfully asks the committee for an unfavorable report on HB 782. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett, Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society