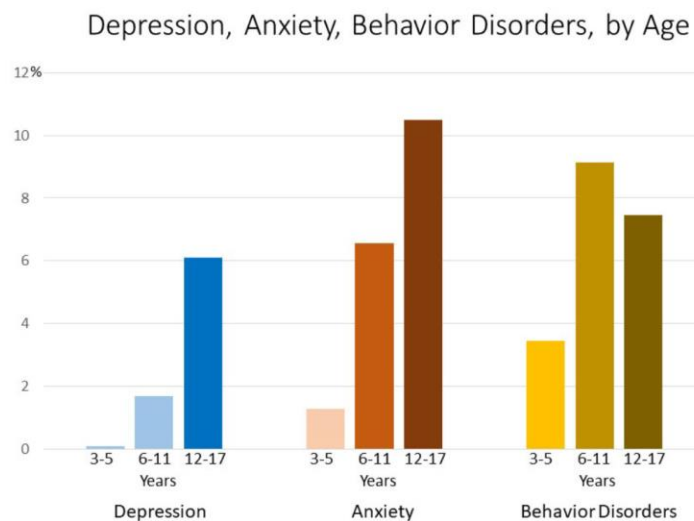


**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee  
**Bill Number:** House Bill 782  
**Title:** Health – Mental and Emotional Disorders – Consent (Mental Health Access Initiative)  
**Hearing Date:** February 26, 2020  
**Position:** Support

---

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care (MASBHC) supports *House Bill 782 – Health – Mental and Emotional Disorders – Consent (Mental Health Access Initiative)*. This bill would allow minors younger than 16 years old with the capacity to consent to mental health treatment.

There are currently 86 school-based health centers in Maryland providing a combination of primary care, behavioral, and oral health services to students. Recent data from the 2017-2018 school year showed that of the over 52,000 visits provided that year, nearly one-third were for behavioral health. This illustrates a great need for additional on-site mental health services for students, who may experience barriers to accessing services in the community<sup>i</sup>. Moreover, data from the CDC indicate that depression, anxiety and other behavior disorders occur in children much younger than 16 years old<sup>ii</sup>.





PO Box 716  
Baltimore, MD 21233  
202.669.0031 phone

For youth seeking health services, mental health is one of the only services where there remains an age requirement for obtaining parental consent.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael Faulkner at [rfaulkner@policypartner.net](mailto:rfaulkner@policypartner.net) or (410) 693-4000.

---

<sup>i</sup> Demonstrating the Value of School-Based Health Centers in Maryland: A Roadmap. Tanya Schwartz, MPP, MSW and Megan Thomas, MPP. Harbage Consulting for The Maryland Community Health Resources Commission and the Council for the Advancement of School-Based Health Centers November 1, 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>