



**House Health and Government Relations Committee
March 4, 2020**

**House Bill 1208
Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Telehealth - Pilot Program**

Support

The National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence-Maryland supports House Bill 1208. Fundamentally, NCADD-Maryland believes that the appropriate use of technology in the delivery of somatic and behavioral health care should be utilized to its full potential. Telehealth is an important part of a health care delivery system that leads to success with regard to access, patient compliance, and positive health outcomes.

For substance use disorders, telehealth can increase access to addiction treatment services by removing the barriers of geography and stigma. The chronic nature of the disease calls for new ways for clinicians to stay connected with patients over extended periods of time. The ability of patients to be able to be in non-clinical settings will be a benefit to those who are in crisis and not able to get to such a setting; those who are home-bound; and those whose personal lives are so busy and possibly chaotic that they cannot physically be in a clinical setting in a timely manner.

This committee has heard repeatedly that there is a workforce shortage as well. New technologies can allow for greater reach in underserved areas and ensure the capacity of organizations to assure connection between patient and provider.

As new technologies develop and their uses expand in their applications related to health care, policies must ensure that no disease space, no clinician type, and no patient be left behind. We urge a favorable report on House Bill 1208.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.