

Andrew N. Pollak, M.D.
CHAIRMAN



Ben Steffen
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MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

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March 5, 2020

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 1443 – Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment - INFORMATION

Dear Chair Kaiser:

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) respectfully submits this letter of information regarding House Bill 1443 (HB 1443). HB 1443 establishes a Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment (Commission).

The MHCC believes that activities required by HB 1443 are crucial to the health of children and young adults. The MHCC recommends that the Commission, if established, consider telehealth as a modality for delivering student behavior health and mental health treatment. Telehealth can provide effective and adaptable solutions to existing barriers to delivering care to students.

Since 2014, the MHCC has awarded 16 telehealth grants to qualified health care organizations to implement innovative telehealth pilots in the State. These grants assessed the value of telehealth interventions across various care settings. A school-based telehealth and behavior health pilot are among the grant awards. Lessons learned from the grant projects inform future applications of telehealth, help develop better practices and improve implementation efforts, and inform policies to support the advancement of telehealth.

The Senate Finance Committee requested in 2018 that the MHCC study school-based telehealth programs, and develop an approach for improving policies related to school-based telehealth to reduce the barriers to telehealth use in schools. The MHCC convened a workgroup consisting of diverse stakeholders; a final report was submitted in October 2019 to the Senate Finance

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Committee.¹ The MHCC also developed a three-part webinar series aimed at expanding the use of telehealth in school health services.²

Thank you for your consideration of this information. Please feel free to contact me at (410) 764-3566 or Ben.Steffen@maryland.gov, or Megan Renfrew, Government Affairs and Special Projects, at (410) 764-3483 or Megan.Renfrew@maryland.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Ben Steffen
Executive Director
Maryland Health Care Commission

¹ The final report is available at:
www.mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/home/workgroups/documents/SBTele/SBT_Final_Report.pdf.

² More information about MHCC's telehealth resources can be found at
www.mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/hit_telemedicine.aspx.

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