

## **USM-SC Mental Health Committee Statement in Support of H.B. 466**

The USM-SC Mental Health Committee was formed in response to an overwhelming desire across USM student bodies to strengthen the mental health and overall wellness of our future workforce. According to the Mental Health Association of Maryland, nearly 75% of mental health disorders will develop before the age of 24. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has also affirmed that nearly 3.3% (more than 5 million) adults in the state of Maryland suffer from a serious mental illness such as bipolar depression. This means that our institutions of higher education are uniquely positioned to normalize and educate students on services available to them from the state or their respective counseling offices.

As our nation continues to deal with the economic, social, and public health fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health crises are only expected to grow. The inclusion of crisis response lines on student identification cards would ensure that students have fingertip access to help when it is needed most and could save lives. It is a small investment that demonstrates the commitment of our schools to reaching students where they are and acknowledging the incredible complexity of the world we live in today. Help is always available, and it is paramount that our students and young professionals are confident in how to access that help.

We urge you to support H.B. 466, and keep students connected to the resources they need survive and be successful as they move forward into the world.

Beth Coleman

UMGC, Graduate Representative

Chair, USM-SC Mental Health Committee