

MedMark Support of SB 646.pdf

Uploaded by: Ashkin, Howard

Position: FAV



Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth
February 16, 2021
Support of Senate Bill 646

MedMark Treatment Centers provides comprehensive outpatient Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in seven (7) state and federally licensed, certified and accredited Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) in Baltimore City (Mt. Vernon, Downtown, Cherry Hill), Baltimore County (Essex, Timonium) and Harford County (Belcamp). **We urge the EHEA committee to rule favorably on SB 646**, which will allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland's long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019's total of 2,090, and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We have learned from experience that telehealth counseling is an essential and successful behavioral health treatment mode of service delivery. Telehealth expands access and flexibility to receive counseling, improves treatment retention and reduces systemic barriers and stigma associated with counseling within brick and mortar facilities – all while increasing patient and community safety through social distancing and quarantine.

The State granted ADTs authority to provide telehealth services on April 6, 2020 for the duration of the PHE, and in accordance with ADT scope of practice and supervision requirements.

While many clients will want to return to in-person interactions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth facilitates patient choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery. Its successful use during the pandemic has demonstrated that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.

The Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. ADT counselors comprise over 50% of our total counselor workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT counselors are an essential part of the SUD workforce, supporting thousands of patients who might otherwise be without care.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

MedMark urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

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24 - SB 646 EHEA - BOPCT - LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Bennardi, Maryland Department of Health /Office of Governmen

Position: FAV



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
Phone: 410-764-4732

2021 Session POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 646

COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Support

TITLE: Alcohol and Drug Counseling – Alcohol and Drug Trainees – Practice through Telehealth

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill authorizes Alcohol and Drug Trainees to practice clinical alcohol and drug counseling without a license or certification through telehealth if the individuals are working as trainees under the supervision of certain approved supervisors while completing certain experiential or course study requirements.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Board”) supports SB 646. The Board recognizes the need for continuity of care and accessibility to services for the public. The bill generates flexibility to meet the needs of clients and increase appointment attendance. Additionally, it increases the retention rates for substance use disorder treatment programs.

For this reason, the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists requests a favorable report on SB 646. For more information, please contact the Board’s Acting Executive Director, Danielle Vallone at 410-764-4734 or Danielle.Vallone@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

SB 646_Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and D

Uploaded by: Breidenstine, Adrienne

Position: FAV



February 16, 2021

**Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 646 Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 77,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore is pleased to support SB 646 Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth. This bill allows alcohol and drug professionals to provide therapeutic counseling services through telehealth.

Therapeutic alcohol and drug counseling services are an important aspect of the treatment regime for people with substance use disorders and support individuals with overall recovery. In Baltimore City, many people in our communities who are living with a substance use disorder do not have access to the counseling and support services they need to recover and lead productive, healthy lives because of barriers to access of these services, including lack of reliable transportation, having no childcare options, and the overall the shortage of behavioral health counseling professionals.

An effective approach to addressing barriers to access to alcohol and drug counseling services through the PBHS is to allow for alcohol and drug counseling services to be provided through telehealth.

Telehealth is an important part of a health care delivery system to ensure that individuals receive care in the least restrictive, more cost-effective setting that is best situated to promote long-term recovery. Telehealth for alcohol and drug counseling services can lead to success in reaching several important goals:

- Expands access to these services in the communities that people live, in particular in underserved communities and for people of color,
- Improves patient adherence with treatment plans and long-term recovery,
- Enhances patient-choice and provides another behavioral health care delivery option along the continuum of care.

Telehealth expands access behavioral health support services and improves health outcomes, making it easier for patients to connect with their providers, and helping to cut costs for patients and providers alike. **As such, BHSB urges the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee to pass SB 646.**

SB 646 Senator Carozza Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Carozza, Senator Mary Beth

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 16, 2021

The Senate Finance Committee

**SB 646 Alcohol and Drug Counseling -Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you, Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for the opportunity to respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 646- Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth. This bill, co-sponsored by Vice Chair Kagan, is intended to provide a permanent allowance for alcohol and drug trainees to provide services via telehealth after the current public health emergency declarations are lifted. Last spring, the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists recommended that alcohol and drug trainees – or ADTs – be allowed to provide services via telehealth. This was a life-saving measure as ADTs represent 40 percent of the overall workforce at the certified level.

Many of our districts are hard hit by health care workforce shortages, especially in the rural parts of the state. Our hospitals, schools, long-term care facilities, and community providers need more flexibility to provide both in-person and telehealth services. The experience in the field these last 10 months with the use of telehealth among all providers has been overwhelmingly positive. Behavioral health programs have seen decreases in no-show rates, increases in retention rates, flexibility in conducting appointments to better meet the needs of clients, and significant client satisfaction with these services.

This bill simply removes a statutory barrier that would prevent ADTs who are currently providing services via telehealth to continue to do so. The bill does **not** change the scope of practice of ADTs nor the supervision requirements. ADTs can only work in a state-licensed behavioral health program, not in private practice. The bill does **not** change the regulations that define ADTs nor their supervision requirements.

This Committee has prioritized telehealth services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. I supported and appreciated having the opportunity to work with Vice Chair Kagan of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee on her emergency telehealth bill last year – Senate Bill 402 Health Care Practitioners – Telehealth and Shortage, which was one of the few bills that were signed into law by Governor Hogan. The State has made tremendous progress in increasing access to health services using technology over the last year – as has the entire country. Other bills are being considered this Session that deal with the definitions and continuing use of telehealth, including one of my own, Senate Bill 139-Interstate Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact.

My bill today, Senate Bill 646, lifts the prohibition on alcohol and drug trainees from using telehealth to deliver their services, and ADTs like all other health occupations would be subject to the uses and limitations defined by other legislation. It would allow ADTs who are currently providing services via telehealth during COVID-19 to continue to do so after the pandemic.

Access to alcohol and drug counseling through telehealth is increasingly important especially given the devastating data from the Maryland Health Department and Opioid Operational Command Center. There were 2,025 overdose deaths in Maryland in the first three quarters of 2020. That is a 12 percent increase from the same period in 2019. Also, there are disturbing trends related to the impact of opioid overdose deaths among Black and Hispanic communities.

These numbers make it clear that Maryland cannot let up in our efforts to provide the needed counseling services and treatment to those with alcohol and drug addictions. Senate Bill 646 would ensure that alcohol and drug trainees can continue to provide telehealth services after the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to report that there is broad support for SB 646 including the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists, the Maryland Addiction Directors Council, the MD Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, and several other organizations across the state of Maryland.

My panel today includes Patrick Mattix who works with Project Chesapeake which provides substance abuse and mental health services in several counties including the Eastern Shore. He will be joined by Dwayne Gould and Paris Brooks who are both involved in alcohol and drug counseling and will share with you the importance of telehealth in delivering treatment services.

We know that alcohol and drug counseling services are critical, especially during the pandemic where we have seen a downward trend in mental health. Alcohol and Drug Trainees are key to the makeup of the addictions counseling workforce and essential as we continue to face workforce shortages in the field of substance use disorder treatment. With the expanded use of telehealth throughout our health care system including the allowance of ADTs to provide telehealth services for the last 10 months, it only makes sense to allow ADTs to continue to provide telehealth services so more clients can benefit from these life-saving counseling services. I respectfully ask my colleagues on the Senate Educational, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for a favorable report of Senate Bill 646.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

A Helping Hand - Support for SB 646 - ADT.pdf

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



**Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth
February 16, 2021
Support of Senate Bill 646**

A Helping Hand urges a favorable opinion on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland's long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019's total of 2,090, and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We have learned from experience that telehealth counseling is an essential and successful behavioral health treatment mode of service delivery. Telehealth expands access and flexibility to receive counseling, improves treatment retention and reduces systemic barriers and stigma associated with counseling within brick-and-mortar facilities – all while increasing patient and community safety through social distancing and quarantine.

The State granted ADTs authority to provide telehealth services on April 6, 2020 for the duration of the PHE, and in accordance with ADT scope of practice and supervision requirements.

While many clients will want to return to in-person interactions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth facilitates patient choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery. Its successful use during the pandemic has demonstrated that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. MATOD members report that ADT counselors comprise approximately 60% of the total counselor workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT counselors are an essential part of the SUD workforce, supporting thousands of patients who might otherwise be without care.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

A Helping Hand urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Bayside Recovery - Support for Bill SB 646.pdf

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



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440 Solomons Island RD N Suite 222
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Ph: 443.486.5680

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth

February 11, 2021

RE: Support of Senate Bill 646

Bayside Recovery LLC in support with the Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) desires that the committee provide a favorable position on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We believe the benefits of allowing for ADTs to continue providing services far outweigh any deficiencies that have been expressed, especially at a time when the overdoses and fatal overdose occurrences in the State are continuing to rise. The ability for Supervision compliance is not impacted, and our patients have an option to continue receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery.

It is time to support efforts that continue to improve, not impair, the “access” and “delivery” of health care to our citizens. SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working under State Licensed and Accredited SUD programs, and receiving the required supervision.

Bayside Recovery, located in Calvert County Maryland provides critical substance abuse services to its citizens, many of whom are in the lower income population. Our patients face many challenges with receiving treatment services for their health care needs due to inadequate communications network infrastructure, inability to afford technologies, and public or social services transportation access. These challenges have existed long before the pandemic created by Covid-19 PHE crises. As a result of the State PHE and relaxation of the existing regulations, we have been able to continue to provide essential behavioral counseling services and support necessary to retaining our patients, many of them being considered high risk candidates for COVID related complications, in treatment during the increased isolation aspects necessary in combating the COVID pandemic. We are confident that this capability to remain “connected” to patients has been instrumental in the ability to enabling these patients to remain in treatment as well as assist with the mental health concerns as a result of the prescriptive components e.g. quarantines, etc., necessary to mitigating the COVID pandemic.

Combined with the fact that there is already a severe shortage of qualified professional counseling resources available in the State of Maryland to not support the bill would be

crippling to the ability for us to continue to provide essential components of our treatment services, which would likely contribute to the continued rise in the increasing return to the Opioid epidemic crises the State is currently experiencing. The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. At Bayside currently, 50% of our clinical counseling staff are ADTs we are constantly seeking out qualified individuals to employee and they are simply just not there.

Bayside Recovery urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Robert Galaher,
Program Sponsor, Bayside Recovery LLC

Concerted Care Group - SB 646 ADT Telehealth - FAV

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



CONCERTED CARE GROUP Integrated Wellness Center

Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991
Support for Senate Bill 646

February 16, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

The Concerted Care Group provides integrated outpatient behavioral health care to over 2,000 individuals each year. We are on the front lines of the opioid epidemic and can testify firsthand to the hardships we face in delivering the right care to the people who need it. The ability to employ ADT (trainee) counselors at the same capacity as we employ fully certified counselors makes one of the biggest impacts in our ability to keep our doors open, meet census limit requirements, and assure appropriate services are rendered. All of our counselors of all types receive ongoing supervision and are closely monitored for quality of care. During this time of COVID we have been relieved to see how the acceptance and increase in the use of telehealth has helped us reach patients in ways we never could before. But the absence of allowing trainees access to this same tool is an unnecessary limit.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We have learned from experience that telehealth counseling is an essential and successful behavioral health treatment mode of service delivery. Telehealth expands access and flexibility to receive counseling, improves treatment retention and reduces systemic barriers and stigma associated with counseling within brick and mortar facilities – all while increasing patient and community safety through social distancing and quarantine.

The State granted ADTs authority to provide telehealth services on April 6, 2020 for the duration of the PHE, and in accordance with ADT scope of practice and supervision requirements. While many clients will want to return to in-person interactions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth facilitates patient choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery. Its successful use during the pandemic has demonstrated that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.



CONCERTED CARE GROUP Integrated Wellness Center

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. MATOD members report that ADT counselors comprise approximately 60% of the total counselor workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT counselors are an essential part of the SUD workforce, supporting thousands of patients who might otherwise be without care.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

The Concerted Care Group urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646. Please reach out to me if we can provide further information or support on this critical issue.

Sincere regards,

Anton Kuznetsov

CEO

Genesis Treatment Services - Support Letter for SB

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



**Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth
February 16, 2021
Support of Senate Bill 646**

Genesis Treatment Services urges a favorable opinion on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland's long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019's total of 2,090, and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018.

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SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

WE URGE THE FAVORABLE PASSING OF THIS BILL

Man Alive Lane Treatment - SB 646 - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



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February 11, 2021

Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

February 16, 2021

Senate Bill 646 - SUPPORT

Man Alive, Inc. is the first established Opioid Treatment Program in the State of Maryland and the second in the country. From our inception, we have been located in Baltimore City. I am writing on behalf of the staff and patients alike at Man Alive, Inc. in urging the EHEA Committee to rule favorably on SB-646 which will allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE.)

Since the onset of this pandemic, we have been operating continually to provide the essential services needed for our patients. The wisdom of granting us approval to conduct telehealth was a life-saving measure. As we all dealt with isolation, the connection between our patients and counselors is real. To know they will have a scheduled call to help process these unprecedented times was critical.

I'm confident some of the patients will welcome the return of "face to face" sessions and in person groups; however, there are some where telehealth will remain an excellent option. We've witnessed the success in utilizing this type of counseling, and I see no reason it should not continue.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed substance use disorder programs. We support SB 646.

Respectfully,

Karen Reese

Karen Reese, CAC-AD, MA
Executive Director

Outlook Recovery - Support for SB 646 2021.pdf

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



Outlook Recovery LLC
21030 Point Lookout RD Unit 10
Callaway MD 20620-2325

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth
February 11, 2021

RE: Support of Senate Bill 646

Outlook Recovery LLC in support with the Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) desires that the committee provide a favorable position on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Outlook Recovery, located in a rural area of St Mary's County Maryland provides critical substance abuse services to its citizens, many of whom are in the lower income population. Our patients face many challenges with receiving treatment services for their health care needs due to inadequate communications network infrastructure, inability to afford technologies, and public or social services transportation access. These challenges have existed long before the pandemic created by Covid-19 PHE crises. As a result of the State PHE and relaxation of the existing regulations, we have been able to continue to provide essential behavioral counseling services and support necessary to retaining our patients, many of them being considered high risk candidates for COVID related complications, in treatment during the increased isolation aspects necessary in combating the COVID pandemic. We are confident that this capability to remain "connected" to patients has been instrumental in the ability to enabling these patients to remain in treatment as well as assist with the mental health concerns as a result of the prescriptive components e.g. quarantines, etc.. necessary to mitigating the COVID pandemic.

Combined with the fact that there is already a severe shortage of qualified professional counseling resources available in the State of Maryland to not support the bill would be crippling to the ability for us to continue to provide essential components of our treatment services, which would likely contribute to the continued rise in the increasing return to the Opioid epidemic crises the State is currently experiencing. The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. At Outlook 50% of our clinical counseling staff are ADTs we are constantly seeking out qualified individuals to employee and they are simply just not there.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to

provide life-saving services. We believe the benefits of allowing for ADTs to continue providing services far outweigh any negative claims currently expressed, especially at a time when the overdoses and fatal overdosing occurrences in the State are continuing to rise. The ability for Supervision compliance is not impacted, and our patients have an option to continue receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery.

It is time to support efforts that continue to improve, not impair, on the “access” and “delivery” of health care to our citizens. SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working under State Licensed and Accredited SUD programs, and receiving the required supervision.

Outlook Recovery urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Robert Galaher,
Program Sponsor, Outlook Recovery LLC

Sibus Treatment - Support SB 646.pdf

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



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Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth

February 11, 2021

RE: Support of Senate Bill 646

Sibus Treatment Services LLC in support with the Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) desires that the committee provide a favorable position on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE). It is time to support efforts that continue to improve, not impair, the “access” and “delivery” of health care to our citizens. SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working under State Licensed and Accredited SUD programs, and receiving the required supervision.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We believe the benefits of allowing for ADTs to continue providing services far outweigh the concerns that have been expressed, especially at a time when the overdoses and fatal overdose occurrences in the State are continuing to rise. The ability for Supervision compliance is not impacted, and our patients have an option to continue receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery.

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland’s long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019’s total of 2,090 and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018. Sibus Treatment Services LLC located in Howard County Maryland, provides critical substance abuse services to its citizens as well as individuals in Anne Arundel and Prince Georges county. Both counties that have seen higher percentages of ODs and fatalities than may others in the state.

Our patients face many challenges with receiving treatment services for their health care needs due to inadequate communications network infrastructure, inability to afford technologies, and public or social services transportation access. These challenges have existed long before the pandemic created by Covid-19 PHE crises. As a result of the State PHE and relaxation of the existing regulations, we have been able to continue to provide essential behavioral counseling services and support necessary to retaining our patients, many of them being considered high risk candidates for COVID related complications, in treatment during the increased isolation



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aspects necessary in combating the COVID pandemic. We are confident that this capability to remain “connected” to patients has been instrumental in the ability to enabling these patients to remain in treatment as well as assist with the mental health concerns as a result of the prescriptive components e.g. quarantines, etc., necessary to mitigating the COVID pandemic. Sibus Treatment Services urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Robert Galaher,
Program Sponsor, Sibus Treatment Services LLC

Silverman Treatment Services - Support letter SB 6

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



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silvermantreatment.com

**Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 17, 2021**

Senate Bill 646 - Support

Silverman Treatment Solutions, LLC. (STS) urges a favorable opinion on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland's long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019's total of 2,090, and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018.

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The State granted ADTs authority to provide telehealth services on April 6, 2020 for the duration of the PHE, and in accordance with ADT scope of practice and supervision requirements.

While many clients will want to return to in-person interactions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth provides patients a choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports their continued recovery. During the pandemic successful telehealth implementation has proven that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. At Silverman Treatment Solutions ADT counselors are a vital part of our clinical workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT counselors for the SUD program community are an essential part of the SUD treatment workforce, supporting thousands of patients statewide who might otherwise be without care.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

Silverman Treatment Solutions, LLC. urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Turning Point - LETTER OF SUPPORT SB 646.pdf

Uploaded by: Ciekot, Ann

Position: FAV



www.turningpointclinic.org
2401 E. North Ave
Baltimore, MD 21213
410 675-2113

“The Way Back Starts Here”

February 21, 2021.

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

RE: Support of SB 646 Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice Through Telehealth

Turning Point Clinic urges a favorable opinion on SB 646 to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue to provide telehealth counselling beyond the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Turning Point Clinic is one of the largest Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) in Maryland providing treatment for over 1600 patients daily. We rely on Alcohol and Drug Trainees (ADTs) to provide counseling to more than 400 of our patients under supervision. The Covid-19 epidemic has forced us to provide the counseling portion of treatment via telehealth, which has enabled us to keep in touch with patients as social isolation measures are still in place in the State. The ability for ADTs to provide said counseling via telehealth has been fundamental to keep patients engaged in treatment and we wish to see this flexibility expanded beyond the Public Health Emergency.

SB 646 will significantly increase access and continuation of treatment by allowing ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling and we, therefore, urge a **favorable report for Senate Bill 646**.

Sincerely,

Rev. Milton E. Williams

President and CEO

2401 E. North Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21213
Phone: (410) 675-2113 - Fax: (410) 675-2117, 2118, 2707

SB0646 ADT Telehealth.pdf

Uploaded by: Martin, Dan

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 646 Alcohol and Drug Counseling – Alcohol and Drug Trainees –
Practice Through Telehealth**

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 16, 2021

Position: SUPPORT

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). **We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of Senate Bill 646.**

SB 646 permits Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue providing counseling via telehealth – while working under supervision for a licensed substance use disorder program – after the current public health emergency has been terminated.

Expanded use of telehealth – including an allowance for the provision of telehealth by ADTs – has been a critical component in Maryland’s effort to mitigate spread of the coronavirus. Increased flexibility in the delivery of these services has protected providers and patients from exposure to the virus, ensured continuity of care for Marylanders unable to access in-person treatment, and increased overall access to care. The service expansion has become a vital part of Maryland’s continuum of care and it must be preserved.

The ability of ADTs to provide telehealth services will be particularly important as Maryland works to address the serious behavioral health impact of COVID-19. Up to 40% of Marylanders have reported feeling anxious or depressed as a result of the pandemic and state crisis hotlines are receiving a startling increase in calls from individuals at risk for suicide. Maryland drug- and alcohol-related deaths jumped by more than 12% through the third quarter of 2020 as compared to the same period a year earlier, including a nearly 15% increase in opioid-related deaths.¹ In a survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 13% of respondents said they have started or increased their substance use to cope with stress from the pandemic.²

Telehealth is a critical tool in our efforts to meet an increasing demand for substance use treatment. For this reason, **MHAMD supports SB 646 and urges a favorable report.**

¹ <https://beforeitstoolate.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2021/01/Third-Quarter-OOCC-Report-2020-FINAL.pdf>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>

For more information, please contact Dan Martin at (410) 978-8865

NCADD-MD - SB 646 FAV - ADTs and Telehealth.pdf

Uploaded by: Rosen-Cohen, Nancy

Position: FAV



**Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
February 16, 2021**

**Senate Bill 646
Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth
Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 646 – Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the pre-existing opioid overdose death fatality crisis has worsened. In Maryland, third-quarter data from the Maryland Department of Health shows a 14% increase in the number of opioid overdose deaths in 2020, over the same period the year before. The numbers were up even before the impact of the pandemic early last year. We have also seen a disturbing trend in the increasing numbers of Black Marylanders dying from overdoses.

What the pandemic has taught us is that telehealth is a life-saving tool in the delivery of health care services, including substance use disorder treatment. Surveys have shown both consumer satisfaction and efficacy. The Maryland Addiction Directors Council conducted a survey of clients that showed that 78% of those using telehealth had a positive experience either all of the time or most of the time. The Behavioral Health Administration conducted provider surveys in the spring and again in the fall of 2020. The second survey results show the following important outcomes:

- No outpatient SUD respondent indicated an inability to provide telehealth in the second survey, compared to 25% in the first survey;
- 42% of programs reported individuals were keeping their treatment/service appointments more often at the time of the second survey compared to 36% in the first; and
- Outpatient SUD programs were twice as likely to indicate that individuals were taking their medications as prescribed more often (32%) in the second survey than in the initial survey (15%).

With the two guiding principles that telehealth should be used when clinically appropriate, and when preferred by the consumer, the use of telehealth should continue indefinitely. All qualified, certified and licensed counselors, with existing regulations, scope of practice limitations, and supervision requirements, should be able to use telehealth when delivering clinical services.

We strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 393.

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.

Directorate Support letter ADT Telehealth.pdf

Uploaded by: Sperlein, Joan

Position: FAV



BALTIMORE CITY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DIRECTORATE

OFFICERS

Joan Sperlein
President
IBR REACH Health
Services

Vacant
Vice President

Vacant
Secretary

Toni Maynard-Carter
Treasurer
Johns Hopkins Hospital
Broadway Center

Vickie Walters
Immediate Past President
IBR REACH Health
Services

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth

February 16, 2021

Support of Senate Bill 646

The Baltimore City Substance Abuse Director (BCSAD) is an advocacy and provider organization comprised of 30 Baltimore City substance use disorders treatment providers representing all levels of care from prevention to residential treatment. Our mission is the promotion of high-quality, best-practice and effective substance use disorders treatment for the citizens of Baltimore City. We are also involved in and support legislation that ensures our citizens get the best possible care through active consideration of legislation as it relates to the health and well-being of our consumer population.

The Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate (BCSAD) urges a favorable opinion on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland's long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019's total of 2,090, and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We have learned from experience that telehealth counseling is an essential and successful behavioral health treatment mode of service delivery. Telehealth expands access and flexibility to receive counseling, improves treatment retention and reduces systemic barriers and stigma associated with counseling within brick and mortar facilities – all while increasing patient and community safety through social distancing and quarantine.

The State granted ADTs authority to provide telehealth services on April 6, 2020 for the duration of the PHE, and in accordance with ADT scope of practice and supervision requirements.

While many clients will want to return to in-person interactions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth facilitates patient choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery. Its successful use during the pandemic has demonstrated that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. BCSAD members report ADT counselors are an important part of the counselor workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT counselors are an essential part of the SUD workforce, supporting thousands of patients who might otherwise be without care.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

BCSAD urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

c/o REACH Health Services
2104 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
(410) 752-6080

SB646 - LAC - SUPPORT Written Testimony 2021.02.16

Uploaded by: Steinberg, Deborah

Position: FAV



Alcohol and Drug Counseling – Alcohol and Drug Trainees – Practice Through Telehealth
SB 646

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Hearing
February 16, 2021
Support

The Legal Action Center (LAC) is a non-profit law firm that uses legal and policy strategies to fight discrimination, build health equity, and restore opportunity for people with criminal records, substance use disorders, and HIV or AIDS. LAC convenes the Maryland Parity Coalition and advocates for laws and policies in Maryland that will improve access to health care and end discrimination for people with mental health and substance use disorders. **LAC urges you to support SB 646, Alcohol and Drug Counseling – Alcohol and Drug Trainees – Practice Through Telehealth, to ensure that a sufficient substance use disorder workforce is available to provide services via telehealth and meet the increased need for care resulting from COVID. ADTs have delivered services through telehealth, under supervision, since April 6, 2020 and permanent authority is needed to reduce health disparities and improve access to health care.**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland has increased flexibilities for the delivery of telehealth services to ensure Marylanders with substance use disorders (SUD) across the State can receive treatment while minimizing the risk of exposure to and transmission of the virus. Among other executive orders, the Maryland Department of Health issued a directive allowing Alcohol and Drug Trainees (ADTs) to deliver telehealth services within the scope of their practice and with adequate supervision and appropriate technologies. Telehealth has allowed licensed and certified SUD programs in Maryland to remain open and continue treating their current patients, who have reported greater substance use and suicidal ideation over the course of the pandemic, while also treating the growing number of Marylanders who have started or increased substance use to cope with the stress and emotional disruption related to the pandemic.¹

Maryland has a significant shortage of SUD providers, and the provider networks in both Medicaid and private insurance are inadequate to meet the needs of Marylanders. ADTs make up a substantial part of the SUD treatment workforce, and they are critical to the successful operation of the programs in which they serve. To ensure continuity of care, post-pandemic, all practitioners working within a licensed or certified SUD program, especially ADTs, must be authorized to use telehealth to meet the needs of their patients. Licensed programs have supervisory structures and quality assurance practices in place for in-person service delivery, and the telehealth platform does not alter that structure. Rather, telehealth allows programs to continue to deliver treatment to their patients while reducing barriers to care such as stigma, transportation, and financial burdens

¹ Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration, “The Effects of COVID-19 on Individuals Receiving Behavioral Health Services and Supports in Maryland: Follow-up Survey, Final Report” (Nov. 2020), <https://bha.health.maryland.gov/Documents/COVID%20Survey%202.0%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>; Nirmita Panchal et al., “The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use,” Kaiser Family Foundation (Feb. 10, 2021), <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>.

associated with missed work hours and childcare.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 646 to ensure comprehensive access to telehealth for Marylanders with substance use disorders.

Deborah Steinberg
Health Policy Attorney
Legal Action Center
dsteinberg@lac.org
202-544-5478 x 305

SB646_Drug and Alcohol Counselors Telehealth_Suppo

Uploaded by: Taylor, Allison

Position: FAV



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Senate Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 646 - Support

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente supports SB 646, "Alcohol and Drug Counseling – Alcohol and Drug Trainees – Practice through Telehealth."

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for approximately 775,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to over 450,000 members.

The bill authorizes alcohol and drug trainees to practice clinical drug and alcohol counseling without a license or drug and alcohol counseling without a certificate through telehealth if the individuals are working as trainees under the supervision of certain approved supervisors while completing certain experiential or course study requirements. Kaiser Permanente is a strong supporter of telehealth and supports the use by drug and alcohol practitioners in this context.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact Allison Taylor at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Allison Taylor".

Allison Taylor, MPP JD
Director of Government Relations
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation's largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente's members.

IBR SB 646 support ADT Telehealth.pdf

Uploaded by: Walters, Vickie

Position: FAV



REACH HEALTH SERVICES

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth

February 16, 2021

Support of Senate Bill 646

The Institutes for Behavior Resources/REACH Health Services (IBR/REACH) urges a favorable opinion on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

IBR/REACH is a full service substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health treatment program located in Baltimore City in the Old Goucher neighborhood. We have been treating people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) since 1991 with all federally approved medications. In addition, we offer individual and group counseling and a health home providing case management and care coordination for our Medicaid patients.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We have learned from our experience over the last 9 months that telehealth counseling is an essential and successful behavioral health treatment mode of service delivery. Telehealth has enabled our disabled and elderly patients to continue to receive support and counseling interventions throughout the public health state of emergency. In addition, as several of our patients have moved out of the city to quarantine with family members in other parts of the state, they are grateful that they can maintain the connection with the counseling staff they have grown to trust and report that they don't want to transfer to a closer provider because they don't want to undo the work they have already done with the current counselor. In addition, we have seen increased treatment retention and greater patient satisfaction, as our patient's report how much it means to them to be able to stay home, stay safe, and still engage with their counselors, especially as they feel more isolated than ever due to COVID-19.

We know that many of our patients will want to return to in-person sessions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, but many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth facilitates patient choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery. Its successful use during the pandemic has demonstrated that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.

ADT's are an important part of the total counselor workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under the supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT's make up 26% of our total counselor workforce and we could not serve the number of patients we

serve during this continued opioid crisis without them. Our ADT staff are mostly bachelors prepared and are working on obtaining certification and/or advanced degrees. The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (BoPCT) has approved them to function in the capacity of an ADT and if they have actual data that supports there are more complaints about the ADT's than other, licensed or certified staff, perhaps the best solution would be to look at the criteria in determining the approval of ADT status within the BoPCT.

The opioid crisis does not appear to be abating to any degree, as a treatment provider, I have a huge issue hiring clinical counseling staff and oftentimes my counselor vacancies remain open for close to 6 months, many of my colleagues that administer programs report the same issue to me, and that means there are people who desperately need services to treat their opioid use disorder who are not getting them. We can do better than this in Maryland.

In closing, SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision. We totally support this legislation and believe that, as a provider, we cannot afford to single out one group of providers who complete the necessary documentation and are given the okay to practice by the BoPCT.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Vickie L. Walters, LCSW-C

Vickie L. Walters, LCSW-C
Executive Director
REACH Health Services

MATOD - SB 646 FAV - ADT Telehealth Counseling.pdf

Uploaded by: Walters, Vickie

Position: FAV



Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Practice through Telehealth

February 16, 2021

Support of Senate Bill 646

The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) urges a favorable opinion on SB 646, to allow Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) counselors to continue the provision of telehealth counseling after the current declared Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the start of the Covid-19 PHE, Maryland's long-standing opioid overdose epidemic has only worsened. MDH reports a 14.5% increase in opioid-related fatalities during the first 9 months of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. The 2,438 annualized opioid-related Marylanders lost in 2020 is an unacceptable 16.7% increase from 2019's total of 2,090, and is an astounding 13.8% higher than the prior peak of 2,143 opioid-related Maryland fatalities in 2018.

As essential healthcare providers, substance use disorder (SUD) programs with ADT counselors have remained open during the pandemic, adding telehealth counseling to provide life-saving services. We have learned from experience that telehealth counseling is an essential and successful behavioral health treatment mode of service delivery. Telehealth expands access and flexibility to receive counseling, improves treatment retention and reduces systemic barriers and stigma associated with counseling within brick and mortar facilities – all while increasing patient and community safety through social distancing and quarantine.

The State granted ADTs authority to provide telehealth services on April 6, 2020 for the duration of the PHE, and in accordance with ADT scope of practice and supervision requirements.

While many clients will want to return to in-person interactions with counselors and group sessions after the PHE, many will have the need to continue utilizing telehealth. Continued telehealth facilitates patient choice to receive high quality counseling services in an effective and accessible manner that supports continued recovery. Its successful use during the pandemic has demonstrated that there is no reason not to allow our entire counseling workforce and all of our clients to utilize telehealth technology – telehealth must remain as an available service delivery after the PHE ends.

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists' 2019 Annual report states that more than half of all Alcohol and Drug counselor applications; and more than 62% of certificates and licenses issued, were for ADT counselors. MATOD members report that ADT counselors comprise approximately 60% of the total counselor workforce, providing individual counseling, care management and care coordination, under supervision of a Board-approved Counselor Supervisor. ADT counselors are an essential part of the SUD workforce, supporting thousands of patients who might otherwise be without care.

SB 646 will permit ADT counselors to continue to provide telehealth counseling while working for licensed SUD programs, and receiving necessary supervision.

MATOD urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Board of Directors 2019 - 2021

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HAshkin@MedMark.com



c/o IBR/REACH Health Services

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www.matod.org

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.

MADC Support for SB 646.pdf

Uploaded by: Wireman, Kim

Position: FAV



Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

February 16, 2021

Senate Bill 646

Alcohol and Drug Counseling - Alcohol and Drug Trainees - Practice Through Telehealth Support

MADC supports Senate Bill 646 for the permanent approval of Alcohol and Drug Trainee counselors (ADTs) to utilize telehealth technology to provide facility-based treatment services under the existing COMAR requirements for supervision and scope of practice. The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (BOPCT) authorized temporary approval for ADTs to provide telehealth treatment during the State of Emergency in April 2020.

ADTs have been integrated into direct service staff at providers delivering substance use disorder (SUD) treatment for all levels of outpatient as well as residential care. As per COMAR, ADTs can only be employed at licensed treatment agencies. This means ADTs cannot work at a private practice or any other treatment setting unless the setting has a State license for an ASAM level of care with supervision and agency regulations detailed by COMAR and by national accreditation organizations.

ADTs make up a significant portion of the SUD treatment workforce. Facility-based providers have needed to expand services in the face of the growing opioid overdose crisis, and due to the significant shortage of incoming licensed and higher-certified counselors, ADTs have represented a growing segment of the workforce. The BOPCT's 2019 Annual Report indicates that 249 ADTs received trainee status in 2019. This constituted 69% of the certified level staff coming into the field for 2019. That report also shows that ADTs compose 40% of the workforce at the certified level with 802 ADTs holding trainee status in 2019.

ADTs are critical to provider staff and the continuing delivery of treatment services. Many providers cannot fill existing positions due to the continuing workforce shortages. In order to provide a snapshot of the service impact, nine MADC providers from across the State, representing the full continuum of SUD care, indicated in March of 2020 that they employ 90 ADTs serving 1,473 clients.

When the BOPCT updated telehealth regulations in 2019 and excluded ADTs from telehealth delivery there was no objection from MADC providers because SUD treatment services including intensive outpatient and residential treatment were not authorized for any

(over)

telehealth services by the State. This made the ADT exclusion a non-issue for providers. But now that telehealth has been made broadly available as a service delivery mechanism, we believe the entire workforce should be allowed to utilize it when the clinician and the client believe it is the best way to deliver and receive services.

In summary, ADTs are a critical workforce component for SUD treatment providers. MADC asks for your support for the permanent approval for ADTs to provide telehealth treatment services under the existing regulations related to scope of practice and supervision. We urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 646.

Sincerely,

Kim Wireman

Kim Wireman, LCSW-C, LCADC
Board Member