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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