



Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 23, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 520 – *Behavioral Health Services & Voluntary Placement Agreements – Children and Young Adults – Report Modifications*

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is a statewide network of private agencies serving at-risk children and youth and advocates for a system of care in Maryland that meets the needs of children and families. MARFY is a program of Maryland Nonprofits and **supports** the passage of Senate Bill 520.

Senate Bill 520 provides important enhancements to the Behavioral Health Administration’s (BHA) annual report on behavioral health services for children and youth. Cross agency sharing of information that can assist agencies in better meeting the needs of Maryland residents they serve is often lacking. Senate Bill 520 will enhance cross agency communication with respect to the provision of behavioral health services for children and young adults and will serve to enhance the identification of service needs for some of Maryland’s most vulnerable youth and families.

The legislation requires the annual report on behavioral health services for children and young adults that is done by the BHA to include information to be provided by the Social Services Administration (SSA) related to voluntary placement agreements (VPAs) for children and young adults, including information relating to agreements requested for children with a developmental disability and the type of placement recommended for agreements that were approved. The bill also requires the inclusion of information related to outpatient and substance-related disorders program services and behavioral health services provided through telehealth. The data in the report is to be grouped by race and ethnicity.

Passage of Senate Bill 520 will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the behavioral health challenges and need for services experienced by Maryland’s children and young adults. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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