

**House Bill 849 Public Health – Medical Records – Fees**

Finance Committee

March 24, 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 House Bill 849.**

HB 849, as amended by the sponsor, is a simple bill that does one thing – it ensures very low-income disabled Marylanders can access the medical records they need to secure essential public benefits.

The bill prohibits the charging of a fee for providing copies of a medical record necessary to apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Act. This includes federal Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs ([SSI/SSDI](#)).

By definition, the people applying for these programs are disabled individuals who have little or no income and resources. Even the nominal cost of a medical record may prevent them from securing the assistance they need to survive.

For some low-income disabled Marylanders, the cost of a medical record places the help they need just out of reach. HB 849 removes that barrier. **For this reason, MHAMD supports this bill and urges a favorable report.**