



Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Bill: House Bill 551 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services - Modifications**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

Many Marylanders rely on telehealth to receive care, especially during the pandemic. Students and families who lack transportation options or access to a nearby specialist also benefit from access to telehealth care. CMS reported that telehealth services usage among Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries rose 2600% between March and June of 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019. Many of Maryland's students and families also lack access to reliable technology and broadband services, which does not allow for the use of HIPAA-compliant video platforms. Allowing the continued use of audio-only telehealth services benefits all Marylanders, but especially those with these specific disadvantages. House Bill 551 would also allow for continuity in behavioral health services for students if there is an absence from school or if a student is out for an extended period.

MSPA is in strong support of House Bill 551 and we respectfully urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org) or Rachael Faulkner at [rfaulkner@policypartners.net](mailto:rfaulkner@policypartners.net) or (410) 693-4000.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Potter, Ph.D., NCSP  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association