



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 123 – Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

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 123 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 123 and we respectfully urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please feel free to contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org.

Respectfully submitted,

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