



March 19, 2021

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass  
House Health & Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support with Amendments – SB 466: Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services – Modifications

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS and WPS support Senate Bill 466: Certificates for Involuntary Admission – Licensed Certified Social Worker–Clinical (SB 466) because physician involvement is still present. Other states allow LCSWs to be signatories for involuntary admissions, such as California and New York.<sup>1</sup> The committee should note that California's law does specify that LCSWs (and other mental health professionals) as secondary signatories should be a last resort if no other providers are available. California's law reads as follows:

(b) If the professional person in charge, or his or her designee, is the physician who performed the medical evaluation or a psychologist, the second person to sign may be another physician or psychologist unless one is not available, in which case a licensed clinical social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed professional clinical counselor, or registered nurse who participated in the evaluation shall sign the notice of certification.

MPS and WPS would then ask the committee to retain the Senate's amendments and ask for a favorable report of SB 466. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Joint Legislative Action Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Only for outpatient treatment