



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE PAM QUEEN
HB 783/SB 425 – Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood
Experiences
SUPPORT

Greetings Chair Shane Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Joseline Pena-Melnyk, members of the Health and Government Operations Committee and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that occur in childhood from newborn to 17 years of age. Examples of ACEs are experiencing violence or abuse; witnessing violence in the home or community; having a family member attempt or die by suicide; living in households with substance misuse, mental health problems, or instability due to parental separation (divorce, jail, or prison).

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce a large number of health conditions, including a wide range of chronic diseases, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. For example, up to 1.9 million cases of heart disease and 21 million cases of depression could have been potentially avoided by preventing ACEs. The economic and social costs to families, communities, and society totals hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Yet, negative impacts due to ACEs can be prevented.

HB 783/SB 425 defines the composition of a workgroup that updates, improves, and develops ACEs screening tools in a primary care setting to identify and treat minors with disorders attributed to ACEs. The workgroup will provide recommendations on reporting, prevention, and mitigation of ACEs, along with connecting youth and servicing agencies for intervention.

The text of this bill including workgroup composition, recommendations, and output was derived from various concerned stakeholders and advocates. I seek a favorable recommendation for these important bills.