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January 12, 2021

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Health and Government Operations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street  
House Office Building, Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Bill:** HB0123- Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, would like to offer its strong support for House Bill 123. HB 123 recognizes the important role of telehealth in the healthcare delivery system. Telehealth has proved to be an effective platform for treatment of many health/mental health care conditions. Research has demonstrated that the provision of health services through telehealth is as effective as provision through in-person meetings for many conditions.

Telehealth allows increased access to care for all individuals and is especially useful in reducing barriers to care for the underserved and those who live in rural areas.

HB 123 maintains specific provisions which have been temporarily allowed during this Public Health Emergency. For example, HB 123:

- **Removes specific originating site requirements** which limits access to care (e.g., patients can receive appropriate services at home or another appropriate location);
- **Allows for the continuation of service delivery through audio-only** means when deemed appropriate – this is a critical access to care issue given that many individuals do not have access to computers or other electronic devices and thereby would otherwise suffer an unintended discrimination by being unable to receive needed services via telehealth;
- **Supports appropriate access to care** by requiring insurance companies and other payers to reimburse telehealth services at the same rate and under the same conditions as if they were delivered in person.

For these, and many other reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 0123.

Please feel free to contact MPA's Executive Director Stefanie Reeves at [exec@marylandpsychology.org](mailto:exec@marylandpsychology.org) if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

*Esther Finglass*  
Esther Finglass, Ph.D.  
President

*R. Patrick Savage*  
R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs