



10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Ste 910, Columbia, MD 21044. Office 410-992-4258. Fax: 410-992-7732. www.marylandpsychology.org

February 11, 2022

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Delegate Mark Chang, Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: HB406 – Children in Out-of-Home Placements – Placement in Medical Facilities

Position: Support with Concerns

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, is writing in **SUPPORT of HB 406 – Children in Out-of-Home Placements-Placement in Medical Facilities.**

We applaud and support purpose of the bill, to better manage the placement of children and adolescents into medical facilities/programs. We also strongly support the inclusion of Psychologists as one of the mental health specialists uniquely qualified to evaluate the mental health status of children and adolescents.

The bill is a good start to building out a system of care that needs attention. For the Committee's consideration the MPA wanted to share these additional points:

1. Requiring the evaluation be set for 48 hours prior to a court hearing may be difficult to meet for several reasons. Some flexibility could be helpful.
2. The use of fines to local departments involved in this process may create the unintended consequence of conflict rather than encourage coordination between facilities and local childcare services.
3. The availability of out-of-home placements for children/adolescents in Maryland is sorely lacking. Additional legislation, in the form of establishing the funding for adequate numbers of out-of-home placements, would provide necessary resources to help fulfill the aims of this bill.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 406. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the MPA Executive Director, Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE at 410-992-4258 or exec@marylandpsychology.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

Linda McGhee

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., J.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr.

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