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The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Oppose – SB 513: Health Occupations - Clinical Nurse Specialists - Prescribing Authority

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Honorable Members of the Committee:

As a psychiatrist working in Maryland, I would urge you to oppose Senate Bill 513: Health Occupations - Clinical Nurse Specialists - Prescribing Authority (SB 513), which would authorize clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) to prescribe controlled substances, including opioids, without explicitly requiring a physician's involvement. Having spoken with colleagues who have experience worked with CNSs, the consensus is that CNSs do not have adequate training to prescribe and manage patient's medical care without physician involvement and oversight. The responsibility of prescribing psychiatric medications and medications for substance use disorder treatment, including controlled substances such as opioids (e.g. buprenorphine) and benzodiazepines is substantial. If used improperly, these medications can cause serious disability or even lead to death. Of concern, SB 513 does not provide any limits as to the type of medications a CNS could prescribe, including narcotics. Maryland patients are best serviced when patient care is physician led, and when prescribing of medication involves a physician.

For these reasons, I urge this honorable committee to have an unfavorable report on SB 513.

Respectfully submitted,



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