



TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone

DATE: February 22, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 656 – *Children – Residential Treatment Centers – Education Funding*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 656.

Senate Bill 656 authorizes a core service agency, local addictions authority, or local behavioral health authority, subject to the availability of funding in the State budget, to approve funding for a youth's educational costs during a residential treatment center (RTC) admission for medical or psychiatric purposes. Under current law, if a youth with an IEP has been approved for a nonpublic special education placement, educational costs in an RTC are covered by their local school system. However, if a nonpublic special education placement has not been approved for a youth with an IEP (i.e., the child has been receiving education in a public-school setting), the parents must undergo a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) process and are obliged to pay child support. There has been a concerted effort to reduce the incidences of VPAs in recognition of the negative impacts on the child, family, and RTC, which often continues to cover a significant cost of a placement through a VPA. Passage of Senate Bill 656 provides a means to ensure a youth's educational costs are covered thereby eliminating a basis for a VPA. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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