



January 23, 2022

The Honorable Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass  
House Health & Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building - Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – HB 32: Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

Under current law, an emergency petition (EP) has to be submitted in paper directly to a law enforcement professional. However, given that many mental health clinicians are working from home, and may live outside the police jurisdiction of the patient, the ability to file an EP remotely will ensure a prompter response to psychiatric emergencies. In addition, HB 32 will also help to prevent a sad reality that many EPs get lost in transit with surprising frequency.

Therefore, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 32. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee