



**House Bill 935 Health and Health Insurance - Behavioral Health Services - Expansion (Behavioral Health System Modernization Act)**

Health and Government Operations Committee

March 9, 2022

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 45,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland provides education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

SB 637 | HB 935 requires Medicaid and other health insurers to reimburse for behavioral health crisis response services, including crisis call center and hotline services, mobile crisis services, and crisis receiving and stabilization services. Crisis response services provide supports necessary to stabilize an individual experiencing a behavioral health emergency and linkages to community resources that can help maintain that stability.

The bills also take several steps to improve state programs that were established to deliver high-fidelity wraparound services to children and youth, including expanding eligibility for families with commercial insurance, increasing reimbursement to encourage more provider participation, and requiring a state review and recommendations for expanding eligibility, particularly as relates to children with substance use disorders

HB 935 can help. This bill includes a variety of reforms and enhancements designed to meet the increasing demand for high quality mental health and substance use care. It will increase comprehensive community-based treatment by expanding Maryland's network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, improve health outcomes and treatment quality by increasing the use of measurement-based care in behavioral health and primary care settings, strengthen the behavioral health workforce by expanding resources for peers support networks and peer recovery specialists, improve care for children and youth by increasing the availability of home- and community-based wraparound services, and reduce reliance on law enforcement and emergency departments by ensuring stable reimbursement for crisis response services.

The demand for behavioral health care is at an all-time high. The enhancements in this bill are needed now more than ever.

**NAMI Maryland respectfully urges this committee to pass HB 935**

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