



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

**SB 2 Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record
FAVORABLE
House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 30, 2022**

Good Afternoon Chair Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, and I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP is the largest membership-based organizations for individuals 50 and over in the United States and has over 870,000 members in Maryland. AARP Maryland supports SB 2.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that advocates for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities, and protection from financial abuse.

SB 2 authorizes a petition for emergency evaluation to be provided as an “electronic record” and transmitted and received electronically. Accordingly, a peace officer may use an emergency petition in the form of an electronic record that is transmitted and received electronically, and an emergency facility must accept an emergency evaluatee if the petition is properly executed. “Electronic record” is defined as a document communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.

At least one in five older Americans has a behavioral health condition. Among Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, the most common conditions are depression, anxiety, dementia, and other neurocognitive impairments. By 2030, the number of older people with these disorders is expected to double. Behavioral health disorders seldom occur in isolation and can often lead to serious physical health issues.

Policy suggests that we ought to reconceptualize how individuals get and receive services. Systems of care should emphasize early identification and intervention with entry into a compassionate continuum of care.

AARP MD believes SB 2 will change the way people get and receive services in a modern medical setting for behavioral health conditions. We ask the Committee for a favorable report on SB 2. For questions or follow up, contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

