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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 9, 2022

HB0935 Health and Health Insurance - Behavioral Health Services - Expansion (Behavioral Health System Modernization Act)

Good afternoon Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about House Bill 935.

You have before you today an expansive, evidence-informed, paramount piece of legislation to overhaul and refine Maryland's behavioral health system to meet the growing demand for mental health and substance use services here in Maryland. Right now, although our state has made significant advancements in how we treat mental health, this bill provides us with an opportunity to take a good behavioral health system and turn it into a great one, with only a few enhancements, which I will outline below.

First, HB 935 will expand comprehensive community-based treatment with Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs), by establishing CCBHCs across the entire state. These federally-designated, proven models already deliver a comprehensive range of outpatient mental health and substance use treatment, care coordination with other providers and services, and connection to other systems and supports. It is time to ensure these Clinics are available and easily accessible to all Marylanders.

Second, this comprehensive bill will improve health outcomes and treatment quality by expanding the delivery of individualized, data-driven, measurement-based care in behavioral health settings and by enhancing care coordination in primary care settings.

Third, this legislation will strengthen the behavioral health workforce that desperately needs support by supplying peer support networks and certified peer recovery specialists. More specifically, the bill will expand resources and professional opportunities for individuals with lived behavioral health experience so they may better assist others in navigating treatment systems and recovery support services.

Fourth, HB935 will improve care for our children and youth with behavioral health needs by increasing the availability of comprehensive home- and community-based wraparound services and supports for children, youth, and families.

Lastly, House Bill 935 will reduce our reliance and strain on law enforcement and emergency departments by enhancing our network of crisis call centers, mobile crisis teams, and crisis stabilization facilities.

This bill is crucial if we want to be sure all Marylanders struggling with mental health and substance abuse receive the assistance they need. It is time to bring Maryland's behavioral health system into the 21st century.

I have submitted some technical amendments at the recommendation of the Maryland Insurance Administration.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 935