

TO: The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
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Johns Hopkins University and Medicine would like to provide information related to the provisions in HB935 Health and Health Insurance - Behavioral Health Services - Expansion (Behavioral Health System Modernization Act). This bill expands the behavioral services available in Maryland by establishing wellness and recovery centers, recovery community centers, peer recovery services. The bill also requires reimbursement, by Medicaid and private insurers, for peer recovery services, measurement-based care and behavioral health crisis services.

Johns Hopkins shares the General Assembly's commitment to addressing substance use disorder in the communities we serve. We deliver substance use disorder treatment to thousands of patients at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and in the community. Across our campuses, Johns Hopkins operates inpatient, residential, day hospital, outpatient, intensive outpatient, medication treatments, peer services and community programs to meet the needs of patients suffering from substance use disorder. Additionally, Johns Hopkins partners with community based behavioral health providers to meet the needs of our patients.

Peer recovery support services are delivered by people who have not only experienced mental health issues or substance use disorder but who have also experienced recovery. Peer recovery support services help people become and stay engaged in the recovery process and reduce the likelihood of a relapse. Because these recovery services are delivered by peers who have been successful in the recovery process, these services represent a message of hope as well as a wealth of experiential knowledge. Peer recovery services can effectively extend the reach of treatment beyond the clinical setting into the community of those seeking to achieve or sustain recovery. Peer support is widely recognized in the medical field as a valuable compliment to professional medical and social interventions. Improved outcomes are particularly notable when peer support services are provided to people with chronic conditions. Peer recovery support services can fill a need often noted by treatment providers for services to support recovery after an individual leaves a treatment program. Peer recovery support services can serve as a vital link between systems that treat behavioral health disorders in a clinical setting and the larger communities in which people seeking to achieve and sustain recovery live. Peer-delivered services have been proven to generate superior outcomes in terms of engagement of "difficult-to-reach" clients, reduced rates of hospitalization and days spent as inpatient, and decreased substance use among persons with co-occurring substance use disorders.

We hope you find this information regarding the important role of peer in recovery as you consider HB935.