



February 20, 2022

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

RE: Support – HB Bill 971: Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Substance Abuse Treatment - Network Adequacy

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.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 971: Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Substance Abuse Treatment - Network Adequacy (HB 971) as it would require a review of the medical assistance's provider directory to ensure that it is accurate and large enough to provide substance use disorder (SUD) treatment for juveniles. The State has made similar efforts for adult mental health access, but is now pivoting to meet the needs of a different population.

A 2015 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) study observed the following<sup>1</sup>:

- Among adolescents aged 12–17 in Maryland from 2011 to 2015, an annual average of 8.9% initiated alcohol use (i.e., used it for the first time) in the past year, an annual average of 5.8% initiated marijuana use in the past year, and an annual average of 3.8% initiated cigarette use in the past year.

---

<sup>1</sup> Behavioral Behavioral Health Barometer - Maryland, Volume 4 - Indicators as measured through the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services, and the Uniform Reporting System, found at:

[https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/Maryland\\_BHBarometer\\_Volume\\_4.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/Maryland_BHBarometer_Volume_4.pdf)[https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/Maryland\\_BHBarometer\\_Volume\\_4.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/Maryland_BHBarometer_Volume_4.pdf)



**Washington  
Psychiatric Society**

- In Maryland, an annual average of about 50,000 adolescents aged 12–17 (11.0% of all adolescents) in 2014–2015 had experienced a major depressive episode (MDE)<sup>2</sup> in the past year. The annual average percentage in 2014–2015 was higher than the annual average percentage in 2011–2012.
- An annual average of about 20,000 Maryland adolescents aged 12–17 with past year MDEs (only 44.4% of all adolescents with past year MDEs) from 2011 to 2015 received treatment for their depression in the past year.
- In Maryland, an annual average of about 44,000 individuals aged 12 or older (0.88% of all individuals in this age group) in 2014–2015 had used heroin in the past year. The annual average percentage in 2014–2015 was higher than the annual average percentage in 2013–2014.
- Finally, an annual average of about 329,000 Maryland youth aged 12 or older (6.6% of all individuals in this age group) in 2014–2015 had an alcohol use disorder<sup>3</sup> in the past year.

HB 971 will ensure that SUD treatment is available for Maryland youth if and when they need it. MPS/WPS asks this committee for a favorable report on HB 971 for all the reasons noted above. 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

---

<sup>2</sup> Major depressive episode (MDE) is defined as in the DSM-IV, which specifies a period of at least 2 weeks in the past year when an individual experienced a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities and had a majority of specified depression symptoms.

<sup>3</sup> Alcohol use disorder is defined using diagnostic criteria specified within the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), which include such symptoms as withdrawal, tolerance, use in dangerous situations, trouble with the law, and interference with major obligations at work, school, or home during the past year. For details, see American Psychiatric Association (1994).