

HB 971 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Substance Use Treatment – Network Adequacy

Health and Government Operations Committee
February 24, 2022

POSITION: Support

I strongly support HB 971.

When my son was 12, he began getting high on a cocktail of over-the-counter medications. His use progressed quickly. He overdosed numerous times. One time he overdosed from alcohol, was transferred to John Hopkins in Baltimore, and had to be placed in a medically-induced coma and intubated. One time he was airlifted to DC after overdosing on Over the counter medications. They said there was no treatment center to discharge him to since he was on Maryland Medicaid.

Since there was no residential substance use treatment for youth on Medicaid in Maryland, my son ended up in numerous psychiatric wards that were suboptimal. While he does have some mental health diagnoses (Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder, Anxiety and Depression), mental health treatment does nothing for him without addressing the treatment he needs for his substance use disorder. He kept overdosing. He did an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), which was a joke – he needed much more intensive treatment than that. He needed residential treatment, but Maryland had nothing. I was told by some outpatient treatment centers that he was too acute to receive treatment at an outpatient level.

There are two substance use residential treatment facilities in Maryland for adolescents, but they take private insurance only. I called to see how much they would cost. One was \$1,200/day, the other was \$1,900/day. I can't even begin to afford that.

Finally, because I am a strong advocate and a squeaky wheel, I got the Department of Health to agree to place him in one of the private residential treatment programs through grant funding, but lately they have not been returning my phone calls, and nothing appears to be happening.

I have been fighting for 4 years to get my son the help he needs. Maryland has nothing for our kids with serious addiction problems.

Please vote favorably on HB 971.

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