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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Testimony in Support of House Bill 32 - Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record

Good Afternoon Madam Chairwoman, Madam Vice Chairwoman, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about House Bill 32.

House Bill 32 authorizes the electronic transmission of approved petitions for emergency evaluation. By allowing these petitions to be more easily shared, it expedites and optimizes the transfers, therefore enabling a faster response to a request for an emergency evaluation. It is imperative that we respond to these emergency situations as quickly as possible to more efficiently provide care for the evaluatee. Additionally, this will remove and alleviate the requirement of a peace officer having a paper copy or original copy of the petition, which again allows for easier transmission through the court system.

To be clear, HB32 does not alter the standards for filing an emergency petition nor how it is granted. The bill does not change any current restrictions surrounding electronically filing through Maryland courts and it does not allow for a petitioner to file a petition for emergency evaluation electronically. It solely allows for further transmission of an endorsed petition to be done electronically.

I have submitted a small technical amendment to ensure the bill is not interpreted to permit the electronic filing of an emergency evaluation petition.

With the implementation of MDEC, Maryland has the opportunity to accelerate, optimize, and update our archaic paper records and transmission of those records. I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 32.