



Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc.
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FAVORABLE

Health and Government Operations Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Behavioral Health System Modernization Act
Submitted by
Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc.

March 9, 2022

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and the Respected Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

The Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc. is pleased to support HB 935 Behavioral Health System Modernization Act.

The Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc., is a charitable nonprofit family peer support organization that provides individualized and group family peer support, information and referral, education, advocacy, and leadership opportunities to Montgomery County parents and other primary caregivers who have children, youth, and/or young adults with behavioral health needs (mental health, substance use, or co-occurring challenges). We also help youth and young adults who have these challenges achieve positive outcomes. The staff and the Board of Directors of our organization are all parents who have raised youth with behavioral health challenges.

As the data below illustrates, the need for quality mental health and substance use care has never been higher.

- In February 2021, nearly 40% of Marylanders reported symptoms of anxiety or depression. Yet nearly a third of those individuals were unable to get needed counseling or therapy.¹
- Over 45 percent of Maryland youth aged 12-17 who have depression did not receive any mental health care in the last year.²
- 650 Maryland lives were lost to suicide last year. 188,000 adults had thoughts of suicide.³
- Suicides among Marylanders aged 18-25 increased by 80% from the first half of 2020-2021.⁴
- The largest increase in suicide attempts and emergency department visits has been among Marylanders aged 65+ (over 90% increase from 2018-2021).⁵
- An estimated 2,876 Marylanders lost their lives to overdose between April 2020 and April 2021, a rate that ranked 7th highest in the country during that period.⁶
- Maryland has 48 federally designated mental health professional shortage areas,⁷ including 16 entire counties.⁸
- Maryland hospitals saw more than 417,000 visits for behavioral health crises in 2019.⁹

HB 935 can help. This bill includes a variety of reforms and enhancements designed to meet the increasing demand for high quality mental health and substance use care. It will increase comprehensive community-based treatment by expanding Maryland's network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, improve health outcomes and treatment quality by increasing the use of measurement-based care in behavioral health and primary care settings, strengthen the behavioral health workforce by expanding resources for peer support networks and peer recovery specialists, improve care for children

and youth by increasing the availability of home- and community-based wraparound services, and reduce reliance on law enforcement and emergency departments by ensuring stable reimbursement for crisis response services.

Children, youth, and young adults with behavioral health challenges and their families will benefit tremendously from the reforms and enhancements included in HB 935.

- The bill will increase Comprehensive Community-Based Treatment by expanding Maryland's network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). States that have implemented CCBHCs broadly have seen increased access to care, reductions in emergency department and inpatient utilization, a mitigation of behavioral health workforce challenges, higher engagement post discharge from hospitals, improved utilization of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders, and improved integration with physical care.
- The bill requires Medicaid and other health insurers to reimburse for measurement-based care in behavioral health care settings and for treatment delivered via the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) in primary care settings.
- Family, youth and adult peer support is an essential component of Maryland's behavioral health workforce. Peers use their own lived behavioral health experience to assist others in navigating treatment systems and recovery support services. The bill provides guaranteed yearly funding for Maryland's community peer support network and requires Medicaid and other health insurers to reimburse for services performed in clinical settings by certified peer recovery specialists.
- The bill will improve the care for children and youth by increasing the availability of home- and community-based wraparound services. HB 935 takes several steps to improve state programs that were established to deliver High-Fidelity Wraparound services to children and youth, including expanding eligibility for families with commercial insurance, increasing reimbursement to encourage more provider participation, and requiring a state review and recommendations for expanding eligibility, particularly as relates to children with substance use disorders. On January 25, 2022, "Intensive Care Coordination Using a High Fidelity Wraparound Process" (i.e., Wraparound or High Fidelity Wraparound) was added to the inventory of research-supported programs listed in the Prevention Services Clearinghouse, which is maintained by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). (<https://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-care-coordination-added-to-inventory-of-programs-in-prevention-services-clearinghouse/>)
- This bill will reduce reliance on law enforcement and emergency departments by enhancing Maryland's network of crisis calls centers, mobile crisis teams, and crisis stabilization facilities.

The demand for behavioral health care is at an all-time high. The reforms and enhancements in this bill are needed now more than ever. The Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc. urges this committee to pass HB 935.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to helping children, youth, and young adults with behavioral health challenges and their families in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Celia Serkin
Executive Director

FOOTNOTES

¹<https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/MarylandStateFactSheet.pdf>

²<https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/MarylandStateFactSheet.pdf>

³<https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/MarylandStateFactSheet.pdf>

⁴Maryland Department of Health Briefing to the House Health and Government Operations Committee. September 15, 2021

⁵Maryland Department of Health Briefing to the House Health and Government Operations Committee. September 15, 2021.

⁶Keating, Dan; Bernstein, Lenny. "100,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in 12 months during the pandemic." Washington Post, November 17, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/11/17/overdose-deaths-pandemic-fentanyl/>

⁷Health Resources & Services Administration, <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>

⁸Rural Health Information Hub, <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/7?state=MD>

⁹<https://www.fundmd988.org/>