

HB0375 MHFA for Coaches.pdf

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Position: FAV

House Bill 375 Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training
House Appropriations Committee
March 9, 2023
Position: SUPPORT

Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of House Bill 375.

HB 375 requires Maryland public schools and public institutions of higher education to provide mental health first aid training to all coaches participating in athletic programs. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a world-renowned, evidence-based program that teaches how to recognize and respond to a person with a mental health or substance use concern or crisis.

MHAMD worked with the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and the Missouri Department of Health to adapt MHFA for the United States. Since 2009, MHAMD has been responsible for the development, oversight and implementation of the statewide *MHFA Maryland* program. The program has trained over 73,000 Marylanders, including over 2500 instructors. MHAMD utilizes a corps of instructors and master trainers who primarily deliver free and scholarship-based trainings through a state grant. This ensures that no one seeking MHFA training is turned away.

Pressure to perform can have a profound impact on an athlete's mental wellbeing. In a study of elite Canadian swimmers, it was found that 68% of the surveyed athletes met criteria for a major depressive episode. The depression prevalence doubled among the top 25% of athletes. Female athletes in particular are at risk for depression, according to a study by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, the NCAA's most competitive division.¹ One study found "many student-athletes report higher levels of negative emotional states than non-student athlete adolescents."²

Injuries are also a frequent catalyst for anxiety, depression, and substance use among athletes. Many athletes may also show signs of posttraumatic stress disorder following a traumatic injury.³ In a study of NCAA Division I football players, 33% of injured athletes reported high levels of depressive symptoms compared with 27% of non-injured athletes.⁴

These prevalence data indicate a need to increase the availability of MHFA training for coaches. For this reason, MHAMD supports HB 375 and urges a favorable report.

¹ Yang J, Peek-Asa C, Corlette JD, et al. [Prevalence of and risk factors associated with symptoms of depression in competitive collegiate student athletes](#). *Clin J Sport Med*. 2007;17(6):481-487.

² Neal TL, Diamond AB, Goldman S, et al. [Interassociation recommendations for developing a plan to recognize and refer student-athletes with psychological concerns at the secondary school level: a consensus statement](#). *J Athl Train*. 2015;50(3):231-249.

³ Specialized care supports athletes' unique mental health needs. The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. News release. February 7, 2022. Accessed March 14, 2022. <http://osuwmc.multimedia-newsroom.com/index.php/2022/02/07/specialized-care-supports-athletes-unique-mental-health-needs/>

⁴ Brewer BW, Petrie TA. A comparison between injured and uninjured football players on selected psychological variables. *Acad Athl J*. 1995;10:11-18.

For more information, please contact Dan Martin at (410) 978-8865

Alston-HB 0375-in favor-Haugen-2023.03.pdf

Uploaded by: Erin Haugen

Position: FAV

In Support Testimony
House Bill No. 0375
Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees
Delegate Ben Barnes, Appropriations Chair
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Ways and Means Chair

March 9, 2023 – 1:00 pm

Delgate Barnes, Delegate Atterbeary, members of the Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees, I am Dr. Erin Haugen, a Licensed Psychologist in the states of North Dakota and Minnesota specializing in sport psychology. I am also a Mental Health First Aid ® Instructor. Alston for Athletes asked that I appear today in support of House Bill 0375, which would require all coaches in Maryland at public institutions to go through Mental Health First Aid ® training. As a licensed psychologist since 2007 and Mental Health First Aid ® instructor since 2021, I can speak to the positive impact that this training will have on the sport ecosystem, which includes athlete mental health.

As a licensed psychologist specializing in sport psychology, I am keenly aware of the mental health and substance use concerns our athletes face. Research by Kessler and colleagues in 2005 indicates approximately 75% of all mental health concerns begin prior to age 24, which coincides with peak years of athletic development. Since the onset of the pandemic, these mental health concerns have increased. Data shared by the NCAA in May 2022 indicated that the rates of reported mental health concerns experienced in the previous month were 1.5 to 2 times higher than reported by NCAA student-athletes prior to 2020 (the onset of the pandemic). Similar concerns have been reported by high school athletes.

Coaches have unique relationships with athletes that place them in ideal positions to recognize and respond effectively to athlete mental health

concerns. A study by Kroshus and colleagues in 2019 (prior to the pandemic) indicated approximately 65% of coaches were concerned about mental health issues experienced by athletes they coached. However, many coaches report that they feel ill-equipped to support athlete mental health and desire more role-appropriate training in this area.

As a Mental Health First Aid ® instructor, I am fortunate to provide this training to many within the sport ecosystem, which includes coaches and collegiate student-athletes. This training is helpful for teaching coaches how to recognize, respond, and refer athletes experiencing mental health concerns to appropriate professionals. It also teaches skills that coaches can use to work effectively with student-athletes. Coaches frequently give me feedback that the skills learned in this program are invaluable to them in and out of sport. Whenever I teach classes to collegiate student-athletes, the feedback is always that Mental Health First Aid ® training should be required for coaches.

I am passionate about athlete mental health and believe all in the sport ecosystem should be empowered with role-appropriate mental health training. Mental Health First Aid ® is an evidence-based program designed to teach non-mental health professionals how to identify, respond, and refer individuals experiencing potential mental health and substance use concerns to appropriate professionals. Therefore, this training offers the opportunity for coaches to enhance their existing communication skills while also learning how to have conversations that effectively link athletes to professional help.

In conclusion, as a licensed psychologist specializing in sport psychology and Mental Health First Aid ® instructor, I am in support of HB 0375. Therefore, I urge the committees to also support HB 0375. I appreciate your time and the opportunity to share testimony with you.

HB375_MACC_JGreene_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Johntel Greene

Position: FAV



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HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS AND WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

**Testimony by
Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director
March 9, 2023**

HB375 – Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, thanks Delegate Attar for their sponsorship of this legislation which would require the Maryland Higher Education Commission to develop guidelines for training coaches in mental health first aid in collaboration with the Department of Health.

The COVID pandemic that shuttered the nation's colleges and universities has had a particular impact on the mental health of our students. Studies chronicled by the Hunt Institute and the Maryland Chronicle of Higher Education are showing that isolation has increased depression, anxiety disorders, drug use and suicides at alarming rates. Poor mental health hinders a student's academic success and leads to high dropout rates. Community colleges who represent a very vulnerable segment of postsecondary students are particularly concerned with assisting these students in staying on track.

Our community colleges participate in the Maryland Junior College Athletics Conference and have student athletes on our campuses. Student athletes are as vulnerable as their classmates to mental health needs, and coaches are interested in supports in identifying and assisting them.

We are asking you to support this legislation which would help coaches access training on best practices in mental health first aid. Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and all your efforts to meet the needs of the students we serve.

For these reasons, MACC requests a favorable position on HB375.

HB 375 Support.pdf
Uploaded by: Maddie Long
Position: FAV



**Testimony in support of
House Bill 375: Education – Coaches – Mental Health First Aid Training**

**Appropriations Committee
Ways and Means Committee
Position: Favorable**

March 9, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. **Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on House Bill 375: Education – Coaches – Mental Health First Aid Training.**

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state’s students. This includes targeted investment in mental and behavioral health services, particularly to students who lack access to adequate healthcare. The Blueprint expanded school-based health centers and increased State funding for local school systems to train school staff to recognize student behavioral health issues and assist local school systems with their training programs. This bill supports the vision of the Blueprint by equipping more school staff with the tools needed to support the mental health of students under their supervision.

House Bill 375:

- Requires the development of guidelines for public schools and higher education institutions to train coaches in providing mental health first aid; and
- Requires each public school and higher education institutions in Maryland to provide mental health first aid training to coaches.

Our country is in the midst of a national youth mental health crisis. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that while there have been considerable measures taken to address adult mental health issues post-pandemic, there are often considerable gaps in capacity to serve youth and families.¹ In Maryland specifically, the Anne E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count data shows that in 2020, 12.8% of children and teens experienced anxiety or depression.² Athletes face many stressors, like perfectionism, threat of injury, and even fear. Sports can provoke new - or exacerbate existing - mental health issues in student athletes, thus the need for informed and trained coaches to respond to student mental health health crises.³

The Blueprint makes investments across all public schools to pre-emptively and responsively address school community behavioral and mental health needs, including trauma informed care. Adding additional mental health resources in our schools will only strengthen our commitment to providing safe and successful World-Class schools.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 375.

*For more information, contact Maddie Long:
maddie@strongschoolsmaryland.org*

¹ [U.S. HHS](#)

² [Anne E. Casey Foundation](#)

³ [National Federation of State High School Associations](#)

Marques_Ogden_HB375_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Marques Ogden

Position: FAV

In Support
House Bill No. 375
Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees
Delegate Ben Barnes, Appropriations Chair
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Ways and Means Chair

March 9, 2023- 1:00 pm

Delegate Barnes, Delegate Atterbeary, members of the Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees. As a former NFL athlete, House Bill 375 is extremely important to me. I played for The Baltimore Ravens and I loved my time living in the great city of Baltimore. But, part of my time in Baltimore was dark, suicidal, depressing and I felt like I was all alone. I never was given any tools or knowledge on how to handle my mental health issues as a high school or college athlete, so when I became a professional athlete I struggled immensely with some really hard issues.

I believe House Bill 375 will better equip coaches when addressing their athletes' mental health. With early interventions like mental health first aid, more mental health awareness and support will be brought to athletics throughout Maryland so that young athletes don't end up almost taking their life, as I once did!

HB 375 LOS MSPA.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Peters

Position: FAV



Bill: **House Bill 375 - Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training**

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

We are writing in support of House Bill 375 - Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training. Mental Health First Aid is a program used internationally to teach the necessary skills to recognize mental health challenges in youth and adults, and connect those individuals to appropriate services. Specifically, the Youth Mental Health First Aid curriculum teaches adults who work directly with youth to respond to mental health challenges in both crisis and non-crisis situations. The curriculum teaches a structured model that is designed to be used by adults with no formal mental health training. Coaches are uniquely situated in our schools and act not only as athletic coaches, but also mentors, advisors, and trusted adult. Because of their proximity to students, they are the ideal candidates to receive this training, which will support the mental health needs of our students.

For these reasons, we are strongly in support of HB375 and urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

HB 375 - Support - MPS WPS.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Tompsett

Position: FAV



March 7, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
Room 121 - House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Ways & Means Committee
Room 131 - House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – House Bill 375: Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training

Dear Chairman Barnes, Chair Atterbeary, and Honorable Members of the Committees:

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 strongly support House Bill 375: Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training. Mental health first aid is a training program designed to help individuals identify, understand, and respond to someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. Coaches have an important role in the lives of their athletes, and they can play a crucial role in helping them manage mental health challenges. Therefore, coaches should be taught mental health first aid.

Coaches are often the first point of contact for young athletes struggling with mental health issues. By providing coaches with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and respond to mental health challenges, they can better support their athletes and help them access the resources they need. Mental health first aid training can help coaches recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, provide initial support, and refer athletes to appropriate resources, such as mental health professionals. Coaches can also learn how to create a supportive and inclusive environment for their athletes, which can promote positive mental health.

Overall, providing coaches with mental health first aid training can help them become better equipped to support their athletes' mental health and well-being. Therefore, for all the reasons above, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 375. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee

HB 375.Mental Health First Aid for Coaches .pdf

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA

BILL: House Bill 375
TITLE: Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training
DATE: March 9, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Appropriations
Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 375 with amendments to remove the mandate to provide the “mental health first aid” training specified in the bill. MABE supports only the bill’s proposal that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), each local board of education, and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to develop guidelines for public schools to train coaches to heighten awareness regarding student mental health issues, including but not exclusively via the mental health first aid program.

MABE supports House Bill 375 with amendments to clarify and correct the definitions so that the bill applies specifically to coaches of public school system intramural and interscholastic athletic activities; and does not mandate, but leaves to local board policy and administrative and budgeting discretion, how extensively to deliver mental health training to coaches, including the day-long mental health first aid training program. “Mental Health First Aid” is a national program with parameters for in-person training that MABE believes are not appropriate to adopt as a one-size-fits-all mandate for all school systems and all coaches in the state.

MABE’s support for this bill is grounded in the association’s advocacy for the essential staffing and resources necessary to meet the mental and behavioral health needs of our nearly 900,000 public school students. The benefits and value of access to high quality school-based mental and behavioral health services for students and families, teachers and staff, and communities at large can hardly be overstated. Prior to the pandemic, evidence was mounting that additional resources were needed to provide the holistic array of social, emotional, behavioral and academic supports for all students. Then the pandemic saw a dramatic rise in students reporting experiencing anxiety and depression and other symptoms. Today, students and staff are coping with these accumulated challenges in an environment of educator and other professional staffing shortages.

In this context, broadening the scope of statewide school health guidance to include the types of appropriate mental health training available to coaches engaged with students makes sense. MABE and all local boards place the highest priority on protecting our students’ physical and mental health and welfare while under our care and supervision, and therefore appreciate this bill’s intent to enhance the level of mental health training for coaches. However, the bill includes terminology, such as “mainstream athletics” that MABE believes should be conformed to references to interscholastic athletics, intramurals, and other school sponsored athletic programs. In addition, MABE reiterates the request to remove the mandate to provide “mental health first aid training” to all coaches. (Requested amendment to strike lines 15-17 on page 2 of the bill.)

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 375 with the amendments described above.

HB375_USM_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Zakiya Lee

Position: FWA



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
House Bill 375
Education – Coaches – Mental Health First Aid Training
March 9, 2023
Favorable with Amendments

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on House Bill 375. The bill requires various educational segments to develop and/or offer mental health first aid training to coaches in their athletic programs.

With the rise of individuals suffering from mental health illnesses, particularly issues that can be exacerbated by the demands of training and competition, it is important for athletic coaches and trainers across the University System of Maryland (USM) to approach athletes with a more holistic approach. Stressors from performance, work, academics, and other factors have the potential to cause emotional disturbances that could lead to declined mental health. The athletic population is more likely to experience an increased amount of stressors due to their performance requirements on top of other life changes. The USM recognizes that every athlete is potentially at risk to experience stressors that could lead to emotional disturbances.

However, “**Mental Health First Aid**” is a proprietary training course delivered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues. The USM understands that the sponsor’s goal is for athletic coaches to have this knowledge and the ability to recognize and respond, “*to indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress, including depression, trauma, violence, youth suicide, and substance abuse.*”

The use of the phrase “mental health first aid” may signal a requirement to use the National Council for Mental Wellbeing’s program, which is cost prohibitive for most USM institutions.

The USM requests that the phrase “*mental health first aid*” be changed to “*mental wellness training,*” thereby preserving the intent of House Bill 375 without binding institutions to using the National Council for Mental Wellbeing’s program.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our thoughts regarding House Bill 375.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of twelve institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards eight out of every ten bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of twenty-one members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

HB 375_ Education - Coaches - Mental Health First

Uploaded by: Alexa Thomas

Position: UNF



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
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BILL: HB 375
TITLE: Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training
DATE: March 9, 2023
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Appropriations / Ways and Means
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 375.

House Bill 375 would require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop guidelines for public schools, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to develop guidelines for public institutions of higher education to train coaches in providing mental health first aid to students who participate in athletic programs in public schools and public institutions of higher education. Additionally, this bill requires that public schools and public institutions offer programs to provide mental health first aid training to coaches.

PSSAM has a longstanding policy of opposing efforts to codify the development of rigid guidelines for any new or existing policy or program; this is especially true when these new requirements do not include a funding source and are ultimately unfunded mandates. Local superintendents strongly believe that the role of content development and implementation of activities described in this bill belong solely to local boards of education in conjunction with MSDE and applicable stakeholders. PSSAM's opposition to this bill is not a reflection of the merits of training athletic staff in mental health practices, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating development of training guidelines, especially those without additional funding appropriated.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 375 and requests an unfavorable report.

230307-HB0375-coaches-mntl-health-traing.pdf

Uploaded by: Christine Hunt

Position: UNF

Christine Hunt and Jay Crouthers
1014 Dockser Drive
Crownsville, MD 21032

March 7, 2023

Maryland General Assembly
Members of the Appropriations Committee
Annapolis, MD

RE: HB 375 – Education – Coaches – Mental Health First Aid Training

Dear Delegates,

We oppose HB 375 and respectfully request that you vote against it.

Although the bill does not “mandate” that all coaches undergo this mental health first aid training it is implied.

Our question to you is, is this something that the coaches in the State have requested?

We feel that it is not within the needs of the coaches’ job to receive this kind of training. It is beyond the scope of their work duties and is another government overreach action to push requirements that the State thinks is a good idea, on those whose job scope does not include it.

If a coach feels that a student is struggling, they could be provided with a list of resources of mental health professionals to refer them to which is referenced in Article 7-452, 3, II in the bill.

This type of legislation further burdens the duties of coaches and creates more governmental red tape and hurdles that employees must surmount. It also adds to the Statewide budget which ultimately leads to increasing our taxes.

Instead of formal training, perhaps a recommendation of certain books could be made and leave it up to each coach to decide if they feel the need of the knowledge.

Sincerely,

Christine Hunt and Jay Crouthers