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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**

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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.