

SB263CarolineThorneSGA_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Caroline Thorne

Position: FAV

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: SB263 – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee – Establishment

Position: Favorable

6 February 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The University of Maryland, Student Government Association supports SB263 in establishing the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee in Higher Education. This bill is important because it prioritizes mental health in college aged students.

My name is Caroline Thorne and I'm the Director of Government Affairs at the University of Maryland Student Government Association. I am in support of SB263 because over the last decade, counseling centers across the nation, and therefore Maryland, have experienced an increase in the demand for mental health services. These numbers have only increased with the pandemic. Looking at the University of Maryland, College Park, between 2016-2019, the Counseling Center saw a 26% increase in students seeking mental health services. As services stand, there is not enough support to meet student's needs. Speaking as a student who struggles with mental health, booking a counseling appointment can be timely and difficult. Last year, I was told due to high demand, appointments are released in batches every two weeks. I was instructed to wake up at 8 am, and call the counseling center line again and again, until they pick up. Ultimately, I did not get an appointment. Though I was able to locate outside resources, not every student can do this. The system as it stands is a barrier to students seeking help.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. At university, students are far away from their parents, their homes and their usual support systems. This bill is a necessity, in my opinion, because it acknowledges that there is no one size fits all solution for each institution, and provides personalized recommendations. Supporting mental health resources is a return on investment for the State of Maryland, as it ensures that students can attend university in the best state that they can. I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB263.

Thank you,



*Caroline Thorne, Student Government Association Director of Government Affairs
University of Maryland — College Park,
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SB0263 MD Higher Education Commission.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Allen

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 263 Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee - Establishment

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 8, 2023

Position: SUPPORT

The Mental Health Association of Maryland 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, mental illness and substance use. We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 263.

SB 263 establishes a committee to study and make recommendations regarding access to mental health services on higher education campuses, review best practices for accessing services and identify the best models for providing services.

A 2020 study on the mental health of 4,000 college students in the United States produced harrowing results. Of these students, 39% reported major or moderate depression, 34% reported an anxiety disorder, 23% experienced non-suicidal self-injury in the past year, and 13% had experienced suicidal ideation in the past year. Despite these high numbers, only 53% of the students who had positive depression or anxiety screens received mental health therapy or psychiatric medications.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted the mental health of college students in Maryland and across the United States. In the fall 2020 Active Minds survey of high school and college students, nearly 75% reported worsened mental health since the beginning of the pandemic, with increases in stress, anxiety, sadness, and depression. The influence of the higher education setting can help address these increased challenges. Of the surveyed students, 66% received information regarding mental health from their institution, and 71% reported they knew where to seek professional mental health services if they needed immediate help.²

Colleges are faced with an increased need without increased resources. Directors of college counseling services have reported rising students needing services, with demand growing at least five times faster than the average student enrollment.³ SB 263 is an opportunity for Maryland to ensure college students have access to the best possible services in a time where suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for those aged 10-34.⁴ For these reasons, MHAMD supports SB 263 and urges a favorable report.

¹<https://healthymindsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/HMS-Fall-2020-National-Data-Report.pdf>

²<https://www.activeminds.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Student-Mental-Health-Data-Sheet-Fall-2020-1.pdf>

³<https://www.mghclaycenter.org/parenting-concerns/college-mental-health-crisis-call-cultural-change-part-2/>

⁴<https://afsp.org/facts/maryland>

SB263EmmaSelvinSGA_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Emma Selvin

Position: FAV

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: SB263 – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee – Establishment

Position: Favorable

5 February 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The *University of Maryland, Student Government Association* supports HB1029 establishing the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee in Higher Education. This bill is important because it prioritizes mental health for college students and benefits the communities of students who are seeking accessible and productive services.

My name is Emma Selvin and I am a member of the Student Government Association at the University of Maryland, and I am here today to support SB263. Mental health has advanced over the last decade with it becoming a more open conversation that people can have with each other. Mental health is becoming a topic that is encouraged rather than silenced. It is the job of every university to make sure students are able to speak about their experiences.. As someone who has personally struggled with mental health since arriving at college, I have not been able to receive services from the Counseling Center at the University of Maryland. This is due partially to the high demand for these services, especially following the pandemic, and a low supply of qualified therapists and psychologists who can see students on a regular basis. While I have been fortunate enough to have the financial resources to seek outside help, there are many at the University of Maryland as well as other USM institutions who do not.

SB263 would give universities the ability to create customizable mental health care for their students which would ultimately reduce stress, cost, and barriers to these services. This bill would ultimately help students across the state of Maryland, and create greater chances for academic success in the healthiest way possible. Mental health services are a necessity to all, and accessibility is key to a thriving atmosphere.

I request a favorable vote on SB263.

Thank you,



Emma Selvin
University of Maryland- College Park
eselvin@terpmail.umd.edu

SB263GannonSprinkle.pdf

Uploaded by: Gannon Sprinkle

Position: FAV

Committees: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: SB263

Position: Favorable

30 January 2022

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The University of Maryland, Student Government Association supports SB263 in establishing the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee in Higher Education. This bill is important because it prioritizes mental health in college aged students.

I have only been on campus for a little over one semester now, and I have seen the tremendous impact that the Mental Health Counseling Center has had on my friends, peers, and community. I have had friends turn to me in their lowest, in their truest time of need, and I have not been able to help them. I am not a professional. I can be a shoulder for my friends and peers to cry on, but I can not help them with depression. I have had friends who have come to me with these issues, I am so grateful that we have the resources available for my friends to get help. These resources are the reason that my friends are alive.

There are communities and universities across Maryland that do not have the luxuries that we have. All people deserve these resources. Mental health is a real struggle that 1 in 5 Americans deal with in a year (shorturl.at/ej1qS). More than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental health issue at some point in their lifetime. People deserve help. Your constituents deserve to be happy. These are resources that are available in our community, we at the University of Maryland are lucky enough to access them. Help out the other communities in our area, they deserve them too. Equalize the mental health resources in institutions across our state, establish the Mental Health Advisory Committee.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB263.

Thank you,



Gannon Sprinkle
University of Maryland — College Park,

SB263IshaYardiSGA_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Isha Yardi

Position: FAV

Committees: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: SB263

Position: Favorable

7 February 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The University of Maryland, Student Government Association supports SB263 in establishing the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee in Higher Education. This bill is important because it prioritizes mental health in college aged students.

My name is Isha Yardi and I'm the Director of Health and Wellness at the University of Maryland Student Government Association. I am also a member of the University Health Center's Student Health Advisory Committee. I've worked extensively over the past three years with our university's Counseling Center and Behavioral Health Services to understand the landscape of mental health on campus. Especially since our return from virtual learning, we've seen a tremendous increase in the need for accessible and timely mental health resources for students. The pandemic has created a number of unprecedented personal and academic challenges for college students. Now more than ever, students require the active support of mental health infrastructure on campus. This sentiment has been echoed by the countless conversations I've had with student coalitions, focus groups, and even close friends struggling to access mental health services in time to meet their needs. As a student who interacts intimately with these systems of care, I am a first-hand witness to the need for targeted, expert-driven guidance on how to improve mental health on our campus.

SB263 establishes an Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee, which would include counselors, clinicians, and other specialists who would develop personalized recommendations for how to improve mental health services at universities in the University System of Maryland. This bill recognizes the urgent need for research around mental health resources that resonate with students' needs and will hopefully expedite system reform by creating a framework for best practices to be developed and disseminated. Students should feel unequivocally supported by the resources available to them on campus, especially in times of need. SB263 is a crucial step in the right direction to improve mental health services for students. I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB263.

Thank you,



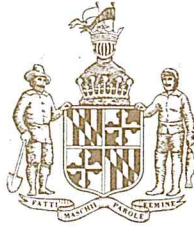
*Isha Yardi, Student Government Association Director of Health and Wellness
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JacksonSB263Tetimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
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Subcommittees

Chair, Pensions

Public Safety, Transportation, and
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District Office
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Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 263

***MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION –
ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
EDUCATION, ENERGY, & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE***

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 263 is a straightforward piece of legislation that creates a committee within the Maryland Higher Education Commission tasked with finding ways to provide better mental healthcare to college students in Maryland. The committee would be made up of numerous higher education and health care professionals and charged with looking at a myriad of factors contributing to the effective use and distribution of mental health resources.

As someone who spent the majority of his professional career in the public safety arena, mental healthcare access is an issue that is very important to me. I strongly believe that the establishment of this committee would be a necessary, preventative effort to protect Maryland's college students and to make sure that they get the help that they require. I am confident that this legislation is step in the right direction to provide students the resources that they need to ensure their success when faced with the pressures of starting their adult and professional lives.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 263.

MPA Testimony 2023 - Support - SB 263 - Maryland H

Uploaded by: Pat Savage

Position: FAV



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February 5, 2023

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Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: Senate Bill 263 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee – Establishment

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, is writing in **SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 263 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee, which is designed to improve mental health access and resources on college campuses.

The mental health needs of the young adults attending Maryland's colleges and universities have never been greater. Even prior to the impact of Covid-19, college mental health resources were severely strained, and an in-depth look at how the college mental health system can be improved is greatly needed. We commend the inclusion of a campus-based psychologist on the Advisory Committee, as psychologists currently provide the bulk of mental health services on college campuses. For these reasons, the Maryland Psychological Association asks for a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 263.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB 263. If we can be of any further assistance as the Senate – Education, Energy, and Environment Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnik, Psy.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

SB263_HB573ShivaniSidhSGA_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Shivani Sidh

Position: FAV

Committees: Education, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on: SB263

Position: Favorable

7 February 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The University of Maryland, Student Government Association supports SB263 in establishing the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee in Higher Education. This bill is important because it prioritizes mental health in college aged students.

Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Shivani Sidh and I am the Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs for the University of Maryland Student Government Association. I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB263.

As college students, we are faced with various types of stressors. Between completing homework and preparing for exams, planning for our futures, and managing extracurriculars, it can be incredibly difficult to take care of mental health. This is especially true for underclassmen, who are highly susceptible to encountering mental health difficulties. This often occurs as a result of the fact that they are independently navigating the new and complex world of higher education.

Last spring, I attempted to acquire counseling after learning that the University provided eight free sessions. After calling the health center, however, I was put off from doing so, as I discovered the long delays and time constraints that I would face. First, I endured a long wait time on the call itself. When I was finally connected to a representative, I was told that I would only be able to schedule an appointment after approximately two weeks. In inquiring further about the scheduling process, I learned that students are only given eight sessions over the course of twelve months.

Maryland's lack of adequate mental health resources and excess of complications for college students is not a matter of inconvenience, but rather an example of the profound need for additional support. Given this, the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee must be established.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB263.

Thank you,



*Shivani Sidh, Student Government Association Deputy Director of Government
Affairs
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SB263_FWA_USM.pdf

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: FWA



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of* MARYLAND

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY and the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Senate Bill 263
**Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory
Committee – Establishment**
February 8, 2023
Favorable with Amendments

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on Senate Bill 263. The bill establishes the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee within the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to study the access to mental health services for students. Senate Bill 263 brings some of this work to the MHEC Secretary, and while the USM appreciates the participation, we have offered amendments to strengthen a well-established process.

In October of 2019 the University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University (MSU), and St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) were required to complete a Joint Chairmen's Report on Mental Health Services. Since January 2020, the USM began regularly convening the counseling center leadership from our constituent institutions. With these (at least) every-other-month meetings, counseling center and mental health professionals talk and collaborate directly with their peers on topics including, but not limited to: campus updates and sharing of best practices; outreach to students; assessment of data; effects of budget constraints; supporting out-of-state students; serving the needs of students as they pertain to changes and adjustments that can be attributed to COVID-19 and civil unrest; unique ways to provide services and address student needs while easing and monitoring health safety protocols; and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and racial injustice on underrepresented communities.

USM has and will continue to examine challenges in meeting the demand for mental health services, best practices for off-campus mental health services, best practices for the implementation of services, staffing, regional concerns, best models for providing care, and more.

Our institutions were able to handle this request with few challenges because for the three years prior, USM, MSU, and St. Mary's vice presidents for student affairs (VPSA), in close partnership with campus health center directors, counseling center directors, and the USM Office of Academic and Student Affairs, embraced the challenges surrounding mental health services in higher education. These in-depth conversations include the sharing of best practices and the evaluation of efforts deemed less successful.

One of the group's most recent organized efforts to study access to mental health care in higher education was the creation of a survey. The VPSAs developed the survey, which included questions about staffing for on-campus centers; the profile of counseling centers and services including accreditations; trends in demand for services; strategies being used/considered to meet

escalating demand; counseling center staff to student ratio; scope of services; expenditures; appointment management; outreach and education; best practices; evaluation of mental health services over time; availability of off-campus resources; reasons students seek support; and services to off-campus student populations.

Select results of this survey were shared with the USM Board of Regents in June 2018, when the Board received a presentation on Trends in Campus Mental Health Services. The presentation featured Liz Brown, Senior Consultant at the Education Advisory Board (www.eab.com), who offered a national view of how institutions are meeting escalating demand, and Dr. Nancy Young, Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, who offered perspective into how campus-based experts are shifting their thinking and practices to best meet the mental health needs of students. Since that time, the vice presidents have continued to address these issues monthly and in more depth at their annual retreats. The Board of Regents dedicated an Educational Forum to mental health during one of its 2021-2022 academic year meetings. The hope is that members of the General Assembly remain aware of the significant work that is being done by the institutions of higher education in Maryland.

The USM seeks to quantify the number of campus-based counseling center directors and clinical psychologists participating in the advisory committee. This is important to encapsulate the diversity of USM institutions and ensure that the Chancellor appoints these important representatives. Secondly, the General Assembly deserves the most detailed and accurate information. **Extending a final report deadline to December 1, 2024, allows for the time and care necessary to provide a clear picture of service and care at USM institutions.**

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our thoughts regarding Senate Bill 263.

Proposed amendments:

Page 2; lines 9-12 are amended to read:

~~(7) A DIRECTOR OF A CAMPUS-BASED~~ [THREE DIRECTORS OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND INSTITUTION MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING CENTER[S], APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY CHANCELLOR;]

~~(8) A CAMPUS-BASED~~ [THREE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND INSTITUTION PSYCHOLOGIST[S], APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY [CHANCELLOR];

On page 2; after line 21 add:

(12) THREE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES INVOLVED IN CAMPUS- BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS ADVOCACY.

Page 4; lines 5 is amended to read:

~~(H) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2021, AND ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1 EACH YEAR THEREAFTER,~~



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.

USM Office of Government Relations - Patrick Hogan: phogan@usmd.edu

NCADD-MD - 2023 SB 263 FWA - Higher Ed Advisory Co

Uploaded by: Ann Ciekot

Position: FWA



**Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
February 8, 2023**

**Senate Bill 263
Maryland Higher Education Commission
Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee - Establishment**

Support with Amendments

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 263 with several amendments offered below. We appreciate the bill's approach to identifying existing policies, barriers and best practices when it comes to helping students in our institutions of higher education access mental health services. We urge that this group's purpose be expanded to include issues related to substance use disorders.

Specifically, NCADD-Maryland proposed this Advisory Committee specifically look at the policies in place that discourage young adults from seeking assistance when there is a medical emergency related to the use of alcohol or drugs. After many years of advocacy, Maryland finally passed a "Good Samaritan" law in 2014 to give people legal protections if they are involved in such a situation. One of the lead advocates was a man who lost his son to an alcohol overdose at frat house on a college campus. The others at the party were too scared to call for help for fear of getting into trouble, and the young man died.

This story happens over and over again, and while people now have legal protections as an incentive to call for help, reports are that on college campuses, such reports can lead to various punitive and disciplinary actions against both the people experiencing the medical emergency and those calling for help. We believe colleges and universities should take a look at their own policies and what public health experts have cited as best practices, especially in light of the opioid overdose crisis that still grips our state.

The national groups Students for Sensible Drug Policy identify several components related to best practices, including having:

- A medical amnesty policy, similar to Good Samaritan;
- Evidence-based drug and alcohol education;
- Naloxone access on campus; and

- Policies that do not rely on academic, legal, or financial sanctions which only serve to stigmatize and isolate people who may need help

We therefore ask for the following two amendments:

- 1) On page 3 after line 22 insert:

(7) STUDY THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ADOPTED BY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE REGARDING THE RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS OF MEDICAL EMERGENCIES THAT OCCUR AS A RESULT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

- 2) On page 4 after line 2 insert:

(V) POLICIES THAT PRIORITIZE THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS AND ENCOURAGE CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE EMERGENCIES

With these amendments, we urge a favorable report on SB 263.

SB 263_Maryland Coalition of Families_Fav with ame

Uploaded by: Ann Geddes

Position: FWA



SB 263 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee – Establishment

Committee: Senate Finance

Date: February 8, 2023

POSITION: Support with amendments

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for a loved one with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to family members with a child, youth or adult with a mental health, substance use or gambling challenge.

MCF enthusiastically supports SB 263 with amendments

SB 263 would establish an Advisory Committee to study access to mental health care in institutions of higher education. The Advisory Committee will be directed to study such things as the challenges colleges and universities are having in meeting the demand for mental health services; barriers to implementing counseling services; and best practice models, including the use of telehealth. Then the Council is to make recommendations.

Across the country, colleges and universities are facing a huge increase in the number of students who need mental health care.

- 1 in 3 (30.6%) young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 experienced a mental, behavioral, or emotional health issue in the past year (SAMHSA, 2021).
- Among college students, 29.1% have been diagnosed with anxiety and 23.6% have been diagnosed with depression (NCHA, 2021).
- 25.5% of adults ages 18-24 reported having seriously considered suicide in the past month. This is a higher percentage than any other adult age group (CDC, 2020).

In a survey of directors of college counseling centers in 2020, nearly 90% reported that the demand for their services had gone up in the previous year – and this was for the year prior to the onset of the COVID pandemic. We know that COVID has had a profound negative impact on the mental health of the population, hitting young adults particularly hard.

Colleges and universities are struggling to meet the demand for mental health counselling.

Lengthy waits for an initial appointment with a counsellor are typical because of the tremendous demand for services along with a shortage of providers. Moreover, once a student is finally seen by a counsellor, they are only allowed a handful of visits before they have to secure a private counsellor off-campus. Many students do not have the resources to do this, and/or they don't want to tell their parents, and/or they don't have access to transportation to go off-campus. While the use of off-campus counsellors (and telehealth) may be one way to address the struggles that college campuses are having keeping up with demand, this approach needs to be undertaken in a thoughtful way that is supportive of the needs of students.

The amendments offered to SB 263 would slightly broaden the charge of the Advisory Committee. The Good Samaritan Law provides legal protections for people who call for help in the event of an overdose or alcohol poisoning. The Advisory Committee must look at how colleges and universities can adhere to spirit of the Good Samaritan Law, and not punish students who reach out for help in the event of a medical emergency brought about by a substance use crisis. Additionally, they should consider the benefits of providing protections to those who are experiencing the medical crisis, to promote help-seeking.

An Advisory Committee is critically needed to look at all of these pressing issues.

Therefore we urge a favorable report on SB 263 with amendments.

Contact: Ann Geddes
Director of Public Policy
The Maryland Coalition of Families
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Phone: 443-926-3396
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Senate Bill 263 MHEC Testimony 02082023.pdf

Uploaded by: Lee Towers

Position: FWA



Wes Moore
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D.
Chair

February 8, 2023
Senate Bill 263 Testimony
Maryland Higher Education Commission

TESTIMONY OF DR. EMILY DOW, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OF THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION, BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 8, 2023, REGARDING SENATE BILL 263, MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION – ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE - ESTABLISHMENT

Good afternoon Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak in support of Senate Bill 263 and offer four suggested amendments.

I am Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary of Academic Affairs for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

Senate Bill 263 would establish the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee within the Maryland Higher Education Commission. It would require the Committee to submit an annual report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Senate Budget & Taxation and Education, Energy, and Environment Committees and the House Appropriations and Ways & Means Committees beginning on December 1, 2023.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission would suggest the following amendments be made to Senate Bill 263:

1. Alter the composition to include non-campus based professionals, for example representatives from the Mental Health Association of Maryland or the American College Health Association (a few examples and not an exhaustive list of possibilities);
2. Alter the composition to include a member of the MHEC Student Advisory Council, the Student Commissioner, or a currently enrolled student at a Maryland college or university;
3. Alter the composition to include a non-mental health campus-based professional (e.g., faculty, academic advisor, etc.); and
4. Change the reporting requirement to every 2 years.

The MHEC Student Advisory Council and Faculty Advisory Council have recently discussed the importance of access to mental health resources. The proposed Mental Health Advisory Committee would create a formal context to discuss relevant issues and proposed recommendations to the Commission.

For these reasons, the Maryland Higher Education Commission requests the committee return a FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS report on Senate Bill 263.

SB 263_MH Advisory Committee MICUA Testimony FWA.p

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: FWA



Maryland Independent College
and University Association

Support with Amendments

Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Senate Bill 263 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee - Establishment

Matt Power, President

mpower@micua.org

February 8, 2023

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 56,000 students we serve, we thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support with amendments regarding [Senate Bill 263 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee - Establishment](#). We applaud the sponsor's leadership in identifying student mental health as a priority issue and in convening subject matter experts and key stakeholders to review policies, procedures, and best practices and models for providing high quality and accessible mental health care on college campuses. This Advisory Committee will make recommendations in areas including: the reduction of costs and barriers to providing access to mental health care to college students; the use of telemedicine, video conferencing, and hotlines; and the implementation of both general and specialized mental health counseling services.

MICUA member institutions offer a wide array of services to support and promote student mental health, emotional growth, and well-being. Counseling and wellness center structures and services vary across individual campuses but typically include: individual counseling, group counseling, on-call crisis services, outreach and consultation, programs and workshops, and referral to off-campus providers for specialized or longer term care. A wide range of resources are available to students who are facing either acute or ongoing mental health challenges and who are dealing with issues related to depression, anxiety, relationship problems, substance abuse, eating or body image concerns, academic challenges, social pressures, loss, and many other situations common for college students. Campuses also provide psychoeducational workshops, outreach, and programming on a variety of topics related to mental health and wellness, as well as training and consultation for faculty, staff, and student staff (such as resident assistants) for identifying and helping students who are in crisis.

MICUA appreciates being included in the membership of the Advisory Committee and offers the following potential amendments to the Committee. We encourage including an additional psychologist given their prominent presence in counseling centers and broadening the scope of workforce shortage areas due to the increased challenges to recruit and retain staff on college

campuses who receive other more attractive career opportunities. The workforce challenges in mental health are apparent given there is legislation introduced to attract individuals to the field as observed in [SB 283 – Mental Health – Workforce Development – Fund Established](#). In addition, we are hopeful that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would not be so prescriptive as to be contrary to individualized student support or to lead to unfunded mandates. Mental health services are not one-size-fits-all; rather, they are complex and require flexibility in the delivery of support services on college campuses.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about any of the information contained within this letter, please contact Irnande Altema (ialtema@micua.org), Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs.

MICUA appreciates the opportunity to share these comments and looks forward to working with the Committee to assist in charting a course that best serves students and their mental health needs.