



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 31, 2023

SB 101

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Collaborative Care Model Services – Implementation and Reimbursement Expansion

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 101 repeals the Collaborative Care Pilot Program and related language, including a report on the pilot program due November 1, 2023. Instead, the bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to provide reimbursement for services provided in accordance with the Collaborative Care Model statewide in primary care settings that provide health care services to Medicaid recipients.

CoCM is a validated, patient-centered, evidence-based approach for integrating physical and behavioral health care in primary care settings, which is where most people with mild to moderate behavioral health conditions first seek care. The model uses a team-based approach to deliver (1) care coordination and management; (2) regular, systematic monitoring and treatment using a validated clinical rating scale; and (3) regular, systematic behavioral health caseload reviews and consultation for patients. CoCM has been validated in over 80 randomized controlled trials and shown to improve health outcomes and save money, mostly via a reduction in unnecessary hospitalization and higher intensity levels of care.

Those experiencing adverse behavioral health issues are among the most marginalized and underserved in our society. The Catholic Church through its parishes, charities and other ministries reaches out pastorally to those struggling with mental illness. Because the Catholic faith embraces an integrated view of the human person as both corporeal and spiritual, we welcome the sciences as one pathway to knowledge of the human person. Pope St. John Paul II said "*Whoever suffers from mental illness always bears God's image and likeness in themselves,*

as does every human being. In addition, they always have the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such.”

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for Senate Bill 101.