



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

To the Senate Finance Committee

Chair: Senator Melony Griffith

February 14, 2023

***Senate Bill 255: Public Health - Home- and Community-Based Services for Children and Youth***

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 255, Public Health - Home- and Community-Based Services for Children and Youth.

MRHA believes that all Maryland youth deserve access to affordable and convenient mental and behavioral health services. In Maryland, the percentage of children between 3 and 17 that experienced either anxiety or depression increased 36% from 2016 to 2020.<sup>1</sup> Of all Maryland youth that experienced at least one major depressive episode in the last year, 44.7% did not receive care.<sup>2</sup>

By supporting this bill, and expanding access to mental and behavioral health services, all youth can live their healthiest lives.

*Sincerely,*

*Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director*

*jdayton@mdruralhealth.org*

1. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2022). (rep.). 2022 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK STATE TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING. Retrieved February 6, 2023, from <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatabook-2022.pdf>.

2. Reinert, M, Fritze, D. & Nguyen, T. (October 2021). "The State of Mental Health in America 2022" Mental Health America, Alexandria VA.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2022). (rep.). 2022 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK STATE TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING. Retrieved February 6, 2023, from <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatabook-2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> : Reinert, M, Fritze, D. & Nguyen, T. (October 2021). "The State of Mental Health in America 2022" Mental Health America, Alexandria VA.