

Written Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
Submitted by Kiwana Floyd
SB 201 - Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs -
School-Based Behavioral Health Services - Reimbursement
February 7, 2023

Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Griffith and members of the Committee. My name is Kiwana Floyd, and I am a school counselor, and a member of the BTU Local 340, the union for educational employees working for the Baltimore City Public School System. I ask for a favorable report for HB 1322.

In 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued guidance to state Medicaid directors that clarified which services can be reimbursed by Medicaid in a school-based setting. This guidance allows school districts to expand their school-based Medicaid programs to cover more students and bring in additional federal funding. Unfortunately, Maryland state law limits school districts to billing only for school health services included in a student's IEP. Our Maryland state Medicaid plan explicitly prohibits reimbursement for school health-related services that are not included on a child's IEP/IFSP.

Maryland lawmakers should adopt SB201 legislation to reflect the latest CMS guidance, so school districts can draw down additional Medicaid funding for school health services to expand access to school-based health services. I strongly feel that this bill would help **all** children receive full access to educational resources that could support their overall wellbeing. Currently, majority of the students who receive school-based behavioral health services are students who have IEPs. As a school counselor who supports students with IEPs and non-IEP students, I see firsthand the need to expand school-based behavioral health services to all children and give every student an opportunity to receive the support that they need to be successful. Providing school-based health services to all children could help more students receive support with handling stress, anxiety and promote healthy self-esteem which in turn could have a great impact on their academics, school attendance and social/emotional skills.

I would like to share an example of a student who I worked with a few years ago. She was a seventh-grade student who refused to remain in her classes for the full class period every day. She was a shy young lady and she did appear to have some social/emotional challenges. Her teachers shared that the quality of her school work, when submitted was always proficient. This student struggled the entire year socially/emotionally and was eventually transferred to another Baltimore City School.

I believe that all students should have adequate access to school based behavioral health services who also have experience in trauma-informed practices. Expanding school-based behavioral health services would provide the necessary social, emotional and behavioral support to more students.

Members of the committee, too many students who need help are being left behind. Maryland is leaving federal dollars on the table. We cannot afford to do this when it comes to providing resources to our children. This legislation will offer the opportunity for more students to receive needed outside services.

As a school counselor in Baltimore City Schools, I work tirelessly to promote access and equity for all students. This bill would help to ensure that all students are receiving the support that they deserve. I am in total support to expand school-based health services and ask for a favorable report on SB 201.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kiwana Floyd".

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