



Maryland Community Health System

Committee:	Senate Finance Committee
Bill Title:	Senate Bill 582 – Behavioral Health Care - Treatment and Access (Behavioral Health Model for Maryland)
Hearing Date:	March 7, 2023
Position:	Support with Amendment

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *Senate Bill 582 – Behavioral Health Care – Treatment and Access (Behavioral Health Model)*. The bill delineates an in-depth public health strategy for advancing access to behavioral health services in Maryland:

- **Commission on Behavioral Health Treatment and Access:** The bill establishes a Commission to prepare a comprehensive plan to address access to care issues for all Marylanders, including marginalized communities. As a network of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), we have a long history of providing behavioral health services to the underservice at reduced cost or for free. FQHCs provide behavioral health services in many of the health professional shortage areas designated by Health Resources and Services Administration. For this reason, we think it would be prudent to include a representative from an FQHC.

On page 4 after line 27, insert:

“(XX) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER”

- **Telehealth Reimbursement:** The bill extends two critical telehealth reimbursement requirements for an additional two years, as recommended by the Maryland Health Care Commission.ⁱ These two provisions – reimbursement for audio-only services and reimbursement parity for telehealth services- are critical to ensure marginalized communities have access to care through telehealth.

We ask for a favorable report with our amendment. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/documents/hit_tlth_study_recommendations.pdf