



**Senate Bill 101 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Collaborative Care Model Services –
Implementation and Reimbursement Expansion**

Senate Finance Committee

January 31, 2023

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Voices of Hope, Inc. is a nonprofit community-based organization that serves individuals with substance use disorders in Cecil and Harford Counties. We provide harm reduction and SUD treatment navigation services, operate Recovery Community Centers and 2 recovery houses. We engage with people who use drugs and are experiencing traumatic events including wounds from injection drug use and homelessness. We believe that many severe health concerns could be addressed in primary care settings before reaching the level of needing crisis health care.

SB 101 will improve the quality of behavioral health care delivered in primary care settings for Maryland Medicaid recipients by expanding their access to the proven Collaborative Care Model (CoCM).

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.

Commercial health insurers in Maryland and Medicare are already reimbursing providers for delivering this model. An ongoing CoCM pilot in the Maryland Medicaid program has demonstrated “clinically significant improvement” in depression and anxiety symptoms for more than 65 percent of participants. It is time to end the pilot and join the 20+ other states that are providing CoCM broadly to their Medicaid recipients.

Voices of Hope, Inc. believes that this model will prevent crisis care and avoid deaths. This bill will improve behavioral health outcomes, save money, and keep people out of crisis. **For these reasons, Voices of Hope, Inc urges this committee to pass SB 101.**

Thank you,

Jennifer Tuerke
Executive Director