



Testimony on SB 582
Behavioral Health Care – Treatment and Access
(Behavioral Health Model for Maryland)
Senate Finance Committee
March 7, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland (CBH) is the leading voice for community-based providers serving the mental health and addiction needs of vulnerable Marylanders. Our 110 members serve the majority of those accessing care through the public behavioral health system. CBH members provide outpatient and residential treatment for mental health and addiction-related disorders, day programs, case management, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), employment supports, and crisis intervention.

This bill takes a balanced approach in creating a commission to study and plan for behavioral health needs over a four-year period while also moving forward with three critical initiatives that will help rebalance our system from one focused on crisis care to one focused on those services that help prevent the need for crisis care. It also provides for innovative changes that will move our behavioral health system from one that rewards volume to one that rewards the achievement of results.

The Commission will be comprised of legislators, representatives of the administrative branch, and members of the behavioral health stakeholder community. They will conduct a needs assessment, review trends and best practices from other states, and make recommendations to provide appropriate and adequate behavioral health services to individuals with complex needs, among other tasks.

SB 582 also includes three initiatives that will help transform our behavioral health system and make the most efficient use of our workforce. These include the continuation of the telehealth flexibilities made available by legislation passed in 2021; the creation of a value-based purchasing program; and implementation of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model.

For your convenience we have submitted individual testimony on these three initiatives.

It is time to take action to address the shortcomings of our behavioral health system and to transform it from a good system to a great one.

We urge a favorable report on SB 582.

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