



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

To the Senate Finance Committee

Chair: Senator Melony Griffith

February 6, 2023

***Senate Bill 201: Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs - School-Based Behavioral Health Services - Reimbursement***

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 201, Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs - School-Based Behavioral Health Services - Reimbursement.

MRHA believes that all Marylanders, including roughly 1.3 million Marylanders under the age of 18, deserve access to affordable and convenient 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>

School-based health centers allow students to have access to mental and behavioral health services at a convenient location. By supporting this bill, more students will have access to necessary and potentially life-saving medical care at school-based health centers.

*Sincerely,*

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

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<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.

<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.