

Senate Bill 8 Mental Health – Treatment Plans for Individuals in Facilities - Requirements

Finance Committee

January 31, 2023

Position: SUPPORT

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health, mental illness and substance use. We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 8.

SB 8 establishes requirements for developing, reviewing, and reassessing treatment plans for individuals admitted to state facilities for mental health services. Additionally, it provides a pathway for family members and other individuals authorized by the person receiving care to become involved in the treatment plan process and establishes a process for the individual to take action should the treatment plan not meet their needs.

Individuals with mental illness admitted to facilities in Maryland on an involuntary basis—both public and private—must have a written treatment plan. However, current law is unclear about who can be involved in the development and review of those plans. The law is also unclear on how and when treatment plans should be reviewed or whether plans should include information about and provision of alternative treatments, services, or providers.

A collaborative process involving the individual directly in treatment planning recognizes the client's experience, perspective, and skills while respecting the provider's or care team's clinical expertise. SB 8 requires regular engagement from the individual at set intervals for evaluation and progress assessment, providing additional opportunities for the individual to provide their perspective in receiving care.

This bill empowers individuals receiving treatment and their selected representatives to be more involved in treatment decisions and ensures that treatment plans evolve to meet evolving needs of individuals receiving treatment. For this reason, MHAMD supports SB 8 and urges a favorable report.

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