



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 01, 2023

SB 108
Health Insurance – Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits – Coverage and Reimbursement

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 108 requires certain health insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations (collectively known as carriers) to provide coverage for an annual “behavioral health wellness visit.” Reimbursement for the visit must be provided on the same basis and at the same rate as an annual wellness visit for somatic health.

Catholic health care has always maintained a priority of reaching out to the poor and most vulnerable, many of whom are in desperate need of readily accessible and high-quality mental and behavioral health services. Senate Bill 108 seeks to identify strategies to meet these challenges through innovation and action to improve the access to and quality of care across the continuum of mental health promotion, prevention, and treatment. As noted by Pope St. John Paul II *"Whoever suffers from mental illness always bears God's image and likeness in themselves, as does every human being. In addition, they always have the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such."*

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 108.