



February 14, 2023

**Senate Bill 362 - Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics –
Established Senate Finance Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

SB 362 will increase access to comprehensive community based mental health and substance use care by expanding Maryland's network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs).

CCBHCs are federally designated, proven models that provide a comprehensive range of outpatient mental health and substance use treatment, care coordination with other providers and services, and connection to other systems and supports. They are based on the federally qualified health center (FQHC) model, providing services regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

CCBHCs must provide nine core services, including services for children and youth, 24/7 crisis intervention, peer supports, substance use treatment, and primary health screening and monitoring. States that have implemented the model broadly have seen increased access to care, reductions in emergency department and inpatient utilization, a mitigation of behavioral health workforce challenges, higher engagement post discharge from hospitals, improved utilization of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders, and improved integration with physical care.

Preparing Maryland for a prosperous future begins with recognizing that our youngest residents must get what they need today to become the adults who will strengthen our communities and build our economy. Fortunately, what our youth need is not a mystery. Recent advances in the science of early childhood development tell us that the early years are a time when the brain is literally building itself from the ground up, in much the way a house is constructed. And, it is the relationships and experiences children have early in life that are the building blocks for the skills they need to remain healthy, and to succeed in school, in relationships, and in the workforce.



The child welfare system serves an important role in the care and protection of vulnerable children. However, children should only enter into it when absolutely necessary. Children should not have to enter the child welfare system simply because they need behavioral supports – we have a behavioral health system for that. Unfortunately, antiquated funding streams require some families to surrender physical custody of their children to the Department of Human Services in order for the youth to access treatment in a Residential Treatment Center and other such programs.

This bill will improve behavioral health outcomes, save money, and keep people out of crisis.

It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 362.

For more information call or email:

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