



SB 362 - Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics – Established

Committee: Senate Finance

Date: February 14, 2023

POSITION: Favorable

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for a loved one with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to family members with a child, youth or adult with a mental health, substance use or gambling challenge.

MCF strongly supports SB 362.

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.

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.

CCBHCS would go some way to improving the continuum of care for children and adolescents with mental health needs. For children with the most intensive challenges, high-fidelity wraparound, as should be provided in the 1915(i), would address much of their need (see SB 255 which would improve the 1915(i) program). But most children do not rise to this level of care. To keep them from needing more intensive services, CCBHCS are the answer. CCBHC's can intervene immediately when a child begins to develop mental health challenges. They

can offer rapid appointments to prevent kids from going into crisis. They can provide 24/7 crisis services, to keep children out of emergency departments. They can provide coordinated care, including therapy, medication management, and family treatment – all on the same day - making it dramatically easier for families to access the care they need. They can provide services in schools, where children spend much of their time, also making it easier for families to access care.

The mental health of youth has dramatically worsened in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children’s Hospital Association joined together to declare a National State of Emergency in Children’s Mental Health. CCBHCs would go a long way to addressing this crisis.

Therefore we urge you to pass SB 362.

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