

**Committee:** Senate Finance Committee

**Bill Title:** Senate Bill 582 – Behavioral Health Care - Treatment and Access (Behavioral Health Model for Maryland)

**Hearing Date:** March 7, 2023

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland School Counselors Association (MSCA) supports *Senate Bill 582 – Behavioral Health Care – Treatment and Access*. The bill creates the Commission on Treatment and Access in Behavioral and Access. The Commission would collect public input through workgroups and make recommendations on improving behavioral health access across Maryland.

We are supporting the bill because youth are facing a behavioral health crisis. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24 years of age.<sup>1</sup> However, youth and their families struggle to get the help they need, as nearly all of Maryland has a behavioral health professional shortage.<sup>2</sup> This bill will provide the framework for Maryland to address this issue. The fund can support initiatives to increase the number of people entering the behavioral health field, as well as retaining them.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7008a1.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/7?state=MD>