



**Bill: Senate Bill 201 - Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs - School-Based Behavioral Health Services - Reimbursement**

**Position: Support with Amendment**

Dear Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

We support the authorization of school psychologists as eligible providers for services reimbursable to local education agencies for Medicaid-eligible students. School psychologists provide essential services including psychological assessment and counseling to many of Maryland's most vulnerable students. Adding school psychologists to the list of eligible providers will increase the amount of funding received by local school systems in Maryland, and this funding can be used to support school psychological services in Maryland. This change will also align Maryland with **34 other states and the District of Columbia** currently being reimbursed for services provided by school psychologists in public schools.

Currently, Maryland Medicaid rules regarding reimbursement for school psychological services leave **millions of federal dollars** on the table. The majority of other states are taking advantage of these federal dollars by allowing their local school systems to be reimbursed for these services provided to students covered by Medicaid, including when these services are provided by school psychologists and other providers certified by their respective departments of education. You will likely hear opposition to this change by personnel from the Maryland Medical Assistance Program; opposition based on their own current rules and guidelines, which are outdated and do not align with guidance from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. You may also hear opposition from community-based providers regarding the potential lost business, exacerbation of provider shortages, large expenses to set up billing systems, or potential for mistakes in billing. None of these concerns are reality. **This bill would only allow school systems to access federal dollars for services that are already being provided by their school-based mental health providers. Additionally, all local school systems already have infrastructure in place to access Medicaid dollars for other services rendered to students receiving special education (e.g., speech/language, physical therapy, etc.). There is also a dearth of community providers who even participate in the Medicaid program (i.e., see clients who are covered by Medicaid).**

**AMENDMENT-** We look forward to working with the bill sponsors to direct the funding generated by this new reimbursement to the recruitment and retention of school psychologists across Maryland through salary increases. We propose salary increases aligned to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future for educators, including \$10,000 for Nationally Certified School Psychologists, an additional \$2,000 for doctoral level psychologists, and an additional \$7,000 for psychologists who maintain their national certification and are employed in a designated low-performing school. The purpose of the funding would be to incentivize school psychologists to remain in Maryland public schools, recruit qualified personnel from other states, and address the shortages across the state. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of 1:500 school psychologists. Currently, there is a 1:1198 ratio of school psychologists to students, over double the current recommended ratio.

If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org) or Sarah Peters at [speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:speters@hbstrategies.us) or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

Status of School Psychologists\*\* as Qualified Providers of School Based Medicaid Services

\*\*States highlighted issue a license to school psychologist

Specialist Level School Psychologists <b>ARE</b> Eligible	Specialist Level School Psychologists are <b>NOT</b> Eligible
Alabama	Arizona
Alaska	Arkansas
California	Georgia
Connecticut	Maine
Delaware	Maryland
District of Columbia	Nebraska
Florida	Nevada
Idaho	New York
Illinois	North Dakota
Indiana	Oregon
Iowa	Rhode Island
Kansas	Tennessee
Kentucky	Vermont
Louisiana	
Massachusetts	
Michigan	
Minnesota	
Mississippi	
Missouri	
Montana	
New Hampshire*	
New Jersey	
New Mexico	
North Carolina	
Ohio	
Oklahoma	
Pennsylvania	
South Carolina	
South Dakota	
Texas	
Utah	
Virginia*	
Washington	
West Virginia	
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	
*Must obtain license from Board of Psychology. Only requirement to obtain license is credential from Department of Education	