



Senate Finance Committee

March 22, 2023

House Bill 615

**Workgroup on Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Other
Underrepresented Behavioral Health Professionals - Extension of Dates**

Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) supports House Bill 615 to extend this workgroup in the pursuit of creating a more diverse behavioral health profession.

There is no dispute that there are racial disparities in rates of addiction, and in its treatment. Differences in treatment include disparities in access to quality treatment, receiving accurate diagnoses, the length of stay and rates of completion in treatment, and recovery rates. There are various recommendations to address these disparities, including hiring treatment providers of color, implementing effective treatment approaches that incorporate diverse cultural values, and hiring staff who are fluent in multiple languages.

There is an overall workforce shortage in the substance use disorder and mental health treatment field. Working with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities to develop strategies to not only increase the diversity of the workforce, but also increase the number of people in the field is one necessary step to better meeting the growing needs of Marylanders.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 615 to give this workgroup time to accomplish its goals.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.