



Ashley Black, Staff Attorney
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 224
blacka@publicjustice.org

SB 101
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Collaborative Care Model Services
Implementation and Reimbursement Expansion
Hearing of The Senate Finance Committee
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1:00 PM

SUPPORT

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Health and Benefits Equity Project advocates to protect and expand access to healthcare and safety net services for Marylanders struggling to make ends meet. We support policies and practices that are designed to eliminate economic and racial inequities and enable every Marylander to attain their highest level of health. **PJC strongly supports SB 101**, which would require the Maryland Department of Health to expand access to and provide reimbursement for services provided in accordance with the Collaborative Care Model under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid).

The Collaborative Care Model is an evidence-based and patient-centered care model that integrates both primary care and behavioral health care. This team-based approach recognizes that most individuals with behavioral health conditions ranging from mild to moderate initiate their care in primary care settings. Through this model, individuals with behavioral health conditions receive care coordination and management, consistent treatment and care monitoring, behavioral health case review and consultations. Adopting the Collaborative Care Model would allow Maryland to serve individuals with behavioral health conditions in the community, thus reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and preserving scarce resources in higher intensity levels of care.

We thank the Maryland General Assembly for passing HB 1682/SB 835 (Chapters 683 and 684 of the Acts of 2018) which established the Collaborative Care Model Pilot Program in primary care settings. In the 2021 Joint Chairmen’s Report on the Collaborative Care Pilot, MDH reported that more than 65% of Collaborative Care Model participants experienced clinically significant improvements in their anxiety and depression symptoms, demonstrating that this model can improve health outcomes of Marylanders with behavioral health conditions.¹

¹ Maryland Department of Health, *2021 Joint Chairmen’s Report – Collaborative Care Pilot Updates* (January 21, 2022), <https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/Documents/JCRs/2021/collaborativecarepilotJCRfinal11-21.pdf>.

We urge the State of Maryland to make the Collaborative Care Model a permanent feature of Maryland's Medicaid Program. SB 101 would positively impact the wellbeing and health of PJC's low-income clients, many of whom are eligible for Medicaid coverage, by providing a means for healthcare consumers to effectively access behavioral health care and primary care simultaneously.

For these reasons, the Public Justice Center urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for **SB 101** so Maryland can join the more than 20 other states that are delivering necessary primary care and behavioral health care through the Collaborative Care Model. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Ashley Black at 410-625-9409 ext. 224 or blacka@publicjustice.org.