

Date: March 14, 2023

Bill number: HB1155

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill title: **Workgroup on Establishing a Youth Codesigned Integrated Behavioral Health Model**

DHS Position: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written support and recommendation for amendment to House Bill 1155 (HB 1155).

House Bill 1155 proposes to establish a workgroup that includes participation of individuals (e.g. youth and young adults) with lived experience to codesign an integrated behavioral health model for youth and young adults. “Lived experience codesign” is an evidence-based approach supported by DHS. DHS has workgroups and committees that value the participation of input and feedback from a broad array of stakeholders, including youth and adults who have used or may be receiving support and services of the Department of Human Services. DHS’ client population is diverse, serving individuals and families across the lifespan. While not all customers may have a behavioral health diagnosis, many have had a behavioral health challenge themselves or may have someone in their lives who has had such an experience.

DHS supports youth and young adults that may be experiencing a behavioral health crisis and they often need more accessible and a wider array of services. Proactively including their voices in a workgroup that is convening to address a health challenge that they face is an important component of the codesign process. DHS recommends support of HB 1155 with an amendment to include the DHS Secretary or the Secretary’s designee to be named to the Workgroup. DHS believes that being included as a member will enhance the collaboration between DHS, sister departments, and other members of the Workgroup, most importantly the youth and young adult members. As the State’s primary social service agency, DHS’ involvement will be beneficial to the results of the Workgroup.

The Department supports House Bill 1155 if amendments are included in the Committee’s report as recommended above. The Department is grateful to offer our support and collaboration on HB 1155 and requests a favorable report with amendments

