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February 12, 2023

Late Written Testimony

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Health and Government Operations Committee

House Office Building, Room 131

Annapolis, MD 21401

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House Bill 82 – Maryland Medical Assistance and Children’s Health Insurance Programs – School-Based Behavioral Health Services - Reimbursement

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Position: Support

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Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee:

Representative to APA Council

Peter Smith, PsyD

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, is writing to express **SUPPORT** for **House Bill**, which will result in a substantial boost in critically important behavioral health services delivered to school children in Maryland.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Communications

Robyn Waxman, PhD

Addressing the behavioral health needs of Maryland’s school children is an essential role for our public schools – students perform better academically, and grow up to be better-functioning adults, when these needs are met along the way. School systems struggle to find enough qualified behavioral health professionals to meet the increasingly high demand for their services. Being able to tap Medicaid funds would enable our schools to bring on board more school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists to provide medically necessary behavioral health services for Medicaid-eligible students.

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School psychologists are fully trained behavioral health professionals who provide essential services including psychological assessment and counseling to many of Maryland’s most vulnerable students. Detailed information regarding their training and services is available from the National Association of School Psychologists (nasponline.org). Federal guidelines now allow properly certified school psychologists to perform these billable functions in a school setting; they are fully capable of doing so here in Maryland. While school psychologists are not currently permitted by Maryland Medicaid to provide billable services to eligible students, we understand that HB 82 removes this prohibition. We urge that HB 82 receive a **FAVORABLE REPORT**..

Legislative

Pat Savage, PhD

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Linda Herbert, PhD

Professional Practice

Karin Cleary, PhD

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Paul C. Berman, PhD

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 82. If we can be of any further assistance as the House – Health and Government Operations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA’s Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

INTERIM EXECUTIVE

DIRECTOR

Thomas Cote, MBA, CAE

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Resnik, Psy.D.

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs