



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 14, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: HB 1155 – Workgroup on Establishing a Youth Codesigned Integrated Behavioral Health Model – Letter of Support with Amendments**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 1155 – Workgroup on Establishing a Youth Codesigned Integrated Behavioral Health Model. HB 1155 creates a Workgroup to review youth codesigned integrated behavioral health models to identify and determine what is required to implement a successful model in the State. The Workgroup is also required to develop a plan for establishing a sustainable youth advisory committee and for implementing a youth-codesigned integrated behavioral health care pilot program (Pilot) in three sites across the State.

Youth co-designed programs are gaining recognition as an innovative approach to eliminating stigma and other barriers that discourage and prevent youth from accessing mental health and substance use services. The youth co-design model means that youth are not only the recipient of services but are partners in all elements of that service, including implementation, evaluation, and the evolution of services. The 2022 Joint Chairmen’s Report (p. 255-256) - Report on Youth-Centered Behavioral Health Intervention and Prevention Programs reviewed youth-centered intervention and prevention models and made recommendations to increase access and expansion of these programs in Maryland.<sup>1</sup>

MDH believes that given current resources and focus, the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) is best positioned to oversee the workgroup and planning envisioned in the bill. In 2021, the General Assembly enacted the Blueprint for Maryland’s future, which includes a section directing the CHRC to staff the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports (Consortium). The Consortium is tasked with developing a statewide framework for the creation of Coordinated Community Supports Partnerships to meet student behavioral health and other needs.<sup>2</sup> These Partnerships need to be “community-based, family driven, and youth-guided,” and must provide “holistic and coordinated services and supports” including both

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<sup>1</sup> FY22 JCR -Youth-Centered Behavioral Health Intervention and Prevention Programs (Maryland):  
[https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2022/2022\\_255-256.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2022/2022_255-256.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>The Coordinated Community Supports Partnerships is an entity (or entities) formed to deliver coordinated community supports.

“behavioral health and other wraparound needs.” The Consortium plans on releasing its first Request for Proposals (RFP) this year and is currently engaging with stakeholders.

Due to all of the work CHRC has already begun in this area, MDH proposes amendments that would have CHRC oversee the planning and engagement envisioned in the bill. We would like to work with the bill’s sponsor, the CHRC, and the Committee in developing these amendments.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at [megan.peters@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.peters@maryland.gov) or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary