



March 10, 2023

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

RE: Support – House Bill 1155: Workgroup on Establishing a Youth Codesigned Integrated Behavioral Health Model

Dear Chairman Peña-Melnyk and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS strongly support House Bill 1155: Workgroup on Establishing a Youth Codesigned Integrated Behavioral Health Model (HB 1155). A Youth Codesigned Integrated Behavioral Health Model (YCIBHM) is a healthcare approach involving youth designing and implementing integrated behavioral health services. Integrated behavioral health services combine traditional medical care with mental health and substance use services in one setting.

A Youth Codesigned approach involves young people as equal partners in the design of integrated behavioral health services, ensuring that the services meet their needs, preferences, and priorities. Youth involvement can take many forms, from focus groups and surveys to co-design sessions where young people work with healthcare providers to design services that are accessible, culturally responsive, and youth-friendly. This approach recognizes that young people are experts in their own health and well-being and can offer unique insights into the types of services and support they need. By involving youth in the design of these services, healthcare providers can create programs that are more effective, engaging, and responsive to the needs of young people, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

A YCIBHM can have several benefits, including:

1. **Improved Access to Care:** By involving youth in the design of integrated behavioral health models, the resulting programs can be tailored to meet young people's unique



needs and preferences. This can lead to increased engagement and uptake of services, as well as improved access to care for youth who may have been previously underserved.

2. **Holistic Approach:** Integrated behavioral health models approach health care holistically by addressing physical and mental health concerns. By incorporating youth perspectives in the design of these models, the resulting programs can better address the complex interplay between physical, emotional, and social factors that impact young people's health.
3. **Early Intervention:** Integrated behavioral health models can help identify and address behavioral health concerns early before they become more serious and challenging to treat. By involving youth in the design of these models, programs can be developed that are better suited to engage and support young people in addressing mental health challenges.
4. **Reduced Stigma:** By involving youth in the design of integrated behavioral health models, the resulting programs can be designed to reduce stigma around seeking help for mental health concerns. By making mental health services more accessible and normalized, these models can encourage youth to seek help earlier, reducing the negative impacts of untreated mental health concerns.
5. **Improved Outcomes:** By addressing both physical and mental health concerns in an integrated manner and involving youth in the design of these programs, the resulting models can improve health outcomes for young people. By focusing on prevention, early intervention, and holistic care, these models can help young people build resiliency and improve their overall health and well-being.

As such, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 1155. If you have any questions concerning this testimony, please contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee