

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 82
Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs –
School-Based Behavioral Health Services – Reimbursement**

**House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 14, 2023**

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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 82, which would require the Maryland Department of Health to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a State plan amendment authorizing certain reimbursement of behavioral health services when provided in a school setting by certain health care providers under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program or the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

It is no secret that between the impact of the pandemic and ongoing school personnel shortages, many of Maryland's students are struggling. It is incumbent on state and local leaders to seek every opportunity to fortify and expand the mental and behavioral health services available to students.

Maryland school Medicaid coverage currently extends to services outlined in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).¹ But with a State Plan Amendment to expand school Medicaid, Maryland

¹ Maryland Medicaid Opportunities, Aurrera Health Group, p. 39 (Accessed February 2023) at: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Documents/2022%20Consortium/Full%20Consortium/Dec%202013%20Mtg/Micigan%20Medicaid%20Presentation.pdf>



has an opportunity to maximize federal funding and expand eligible behavioral health services to students without an IEP or ISFP.² We strongly support this effort, and as a next step, we urge state leaders to expand licensure eligibility requirements to ensure that reimbursement extends to certified school psychologists.

It is essential that we remain mindful in the implementation of school Medicaid as to not further strain the workloads of hardworking behavioral health personnel. However, we know from model states like Michigan that with adequate support, school Medicaid expansion can yield benefits for staff and students alike.³

Twenty-one states have either already expanded school Medicaid or are currently in the process of doing so.⁴ It is time for Maryland to join them in taking full advantage of the federal funding available for school health.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 82.

² Maryland Medicaid Opportunities, Aurrera Health Group, p. 41-44 (Accessed February 2023) at: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Documents/2022%20Consortium/Full%20Consortium/Dec%2013%20Mtg/Michigan%20Medicaid%20Presentation.pdf>

³ MICHIGAN SCHOOL SERVICES PROGRAM – FREE CARE TIMELINE, p. 25-27; 35 (Accessed February 2023) at: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Documents/2022%20Consortium/Full%20Consortium/Dec%2013%20Mtg/Michigan%20Medicaid%20Presentation.pdf>

⁴ Healthy Schools Campaign, p. 19 (Accessed February 2023) at: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Documents/2022%20Consortium/Full%20Consortium/Dec%2013%20Mtg/Michigan%20Medicaid%20Presentation.pdf>