

LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
Legislative District 20
Montgomery County

Economic Matters Committee

Subcommittees

Public Utilities

Chair, Unemployment Insurance



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 220
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3423 · 301-858-3423
800-492-7122 Ext. 3423
Lorig.Charkoudian@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 82- MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS-
SCHOOL-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES- REIMBURSEMENT

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

FEBRUARY 14, 2023

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

As federal data confirms, more than 75 percent of schools surveyed in 2022 say that their teachers and staff have voiced concerns about student mental health and have noticed a spike in the number of students seeking mental health services.¹ Currently, a child's access to mental health services is heavily dependent on a number of intersecting factors including community prevalence of mental health care services, age, and household income.² The pandemic has exacerbated previously existing disparities in mental health care access.

Receiving mental health services in schools is a proven way to help young people facing mental health challenges, especially in underserved communities. Since children spend much of their time in educational settings, schools offer a unique opportunity for early identification, prevention, and interventions once issues are identified.

This bill requires Maryland to take the necessary steps to allow income-eligible children to receive mental health services in a school setting, funded by Medicaid.

In 2014, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services expanded to allow the use of Medicaid to pay for school health services for all Medicaid-enrolled students. Eighteen states have taken the necessary steps, as of December 2021, to align their state Medicaid plan with federal policy to access these funds. Maryland has not yet done so. This bill will ensure Maryland joins these other states. It will require the Maryland Department of Health to apply for a State plan amendment to the CMS that would authorize expanded reimbursement to providers of behavioral health services when provided in a school setting.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 82.

¹ "Schools are struggling to meet rising mental health needs, data shows." Washington Post. 31 May 2022.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/05/31/schools-mental-health-covid-students/>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health*. 3 June 2022.
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>