

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill Number:** HB 82 - Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs School-Based Behavioral Health Services – Reimbursement

**Hearing Date:** February 14, 2023

**Position:** Favorable with Amendment

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The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA) supports *House Bill 82 – Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs – School-Based Behavioral Health Services – Reimbursement*. The bill requires the State to seek federal matching funds for behavioral health services provided to Medicaid enrollees in schools.

MSCA supports this initiative, as it could provide a needed infusion of funding to local education agencies for behavioral health and wrap-around services. Other states have implemented similar initiatives since the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services changed the “free care” rule in 2014.

We appreciate the inclusion of school counselors in the bill. However, we would note that we do not believe services from school counselors are billable under Medicaid rules. If that is the case, then we would recommend removing school counselors from the bill. School counselors are essential to the wellbeing of students, as we are responsible for supporting the wellbeing of the entire student body of the school. This role is different from practitioners who provide direct services to individual students.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation, and we would support an amendment to remove school counselors from the bill if our services are not billable under Medicaid. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).