



March 28, 2023

Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT with Amendments
SB 558- Recovery Residence Grant Program- Establishment

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. **Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 78,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.**

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 558- Recovery Residence Grant Program- Establishment with amendments. This bill establishes a Recovery Residence Grant Program in the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to award competitive grants to recovery residences to support operations, services and programs.

A recovery residence is a service that provides alcohol-free and illicit drug-free housing to individuals with substance-related disorders or addictive disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance-related disorders. They are viewed as a viable and cost-effective alternative to established recovery-oriented systems of care. BHSB supports SB 558 because this will provide critical funding for recovery residences in Maryland. These homes are a good alternative as they provide safe and healthy environments that support residents in their recovery.

Currently certified recovery homes are credentialed by the Behavioral Health Administration. The various levels of recovery residences have specific requirements they must meet for certification. It is important that the conditions outlined in the bill align with the existing requirements. As such, **BHSB urges the House Health and Government Operations Committee to support SB 558 with the following proposed amendments:**

On page 3, strike lines 7 through 27 in their entirety

- Lines 5 & 6 state an eligible entity must “BE CERTIFIED AS A LEVEL II RECOVERY RESIDENCE BY THE CREDENTIALING ENTITY”
- The credentialing entity is the Behavioral Health Administration of the MD Department of Health. Here’s the page with info on the levels of RRs:
<https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/Recovery-Residences.aspx>.

On page 4, strike lines 8 and 9

- The credentialing entity is the Behavioral Health Administration of the MD Department of Health, so they don’t need to consult with themselves.

Contact:

Stacey Jefferson
Director, Policy, and Stakeholder Engagement
Stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org /443-813-9231