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Written Testimony

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

Support

Background: House Bill 82 would authorize for Medicaid reimbursement of certain behavioral health services when provided in a school setting under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program or the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Jewish Community Services (JCS), which offers programs and services for people of all ages and backgrounds, helping them achieve their goals, enhance their wellbeing, and maximize their independence. JCS currently provides therapy and medication management to a large population of clients with both commercial and public insurance, many of whom have Medicaid. These behavioral health intervention services are incredibly helpful in enhancing patient wellbeing.

Positive behavioral and mental health allows people to be more productive; cope more effectively with everyday stress; maintain a positive outlook; and engage in healthy eating, sleeping, and exercise habits. These are all behaviors that should be taught at a young age in order to set our children up for success. This is why swift action is needed to allow for Medicaid reimbursement for behavioral health services. If we cannot authorize the expansion of these existing practices, we are doing a great disservice to our most vulnerable, low-income students as they navigate the stresses of balancing schoolwork and home life.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB82.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.