



10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Ste 910, Columbia, MD 21044. Office 410-992-4258. Fax: [410-992-7732](tel:410-992-7732). www.marylandpsychology.org

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March 22, 2023

Senator Melony Griffith, Chair
Senator Kathy Klausmeier, Vice Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 26 Health Occupations – Psychologists – Licensure Qualifications
Position: **Support**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the House Health and Government Operations Committee to **FAVORABLY report on House Bill 26**. House Bill 26 allows an efficient and effective mechanism for individuals who obtained a doctoral degree in psychology but did not specialize in the provision of clinical care to clients, to obtain the education, training, and experience necessary to deliver clinical services and meet the criteria set for licensure by Maryland law.

This bill is a small step towards providing **increased access to mental health care** for Marylanders. As a result of the recent and ongoing effects of the pandemic, it has become clear that the need for mental health services has outstripped the ability of currently licensed providers to provide mental health care to those in need. Not only must we increase access to care, but we must be careful to maintain the quality of mental health care that is delivered to our citizens. This bill ensures that those who seek a re-specialization certificate meet the same standards as those who graduated from degree programs that are accredited by both the American Psychological Association and the Canadian Psychological Association to provide psychological care to people. In previous decades, a path to licensure in Maryland was available for individuals with a psychology doctorate that was not in clinical, but administrative changes at both the state and national levels have eliminated that route, which we believe should be restored to increase access.

Finally, we believe this bill minimizes the administrative impact on the Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists while providing an avenue for increased access to quality mental health care.

Thank you for considering our comments on House Bill 26. If we can be of any further assistance as the House – Health and Government Operations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs