



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman  
Maryland Federation of Republican Women  
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The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chairman  
And Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates,

RE: **HB-0082** Maryland Medical Assistance and Children's Health Insurance Programs – School-Based Behavioral Health Services – Reimbursement – **OPPOSE**.

Dear Chairman Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women OPPOSE HB-0082. HB-0082 cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be considered in the context of the recent change in Maryland law that lowered the age at which a student is considered mature enough to consent to mental health counseling and treatment without parental knowledge and/or consent from 16 to 12 years of age. One must also consider the Maryland Comprehensive Health Education Framework (HB 0119) and the trend to promote transgender treatments and mutilating surgery for all, including minors as seen in HB 0283.

HB-0082 does not mention whether parents and guardians must be consulted or must grant approval before services are rendered. It does not say whether puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, ADHD drugs, abortion drugs or other drugs can be prescribed or provided under “medically necessary school-based behavioral health services” without parental knowledge and/or consent.

The bill calls for a State Plan Amendment to provide reimbursement to the maximum extent permitted under federal and state law for medically necessary school-based behavioral health services provided to all individuals enrolled in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program or the Maryland Children's Health Program. Services reimbursed under the requested state plan amendment shall be reimbursable when provided by a school-based mental health provider working within their scope of practice, including school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and other behavioral health professionals and paraprofessionals certified by the Maryland State Department of Education.

Before enacting a bill that will give the State Board of Education the financial resources to go full-speed ahead on providing school-based mental-health services, there need to be safeguards for vulnerable children, and knowledge and involvement of parents and legal guardians. These protections are not provided in HB0082. For all of the above reasons, please vote an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **HB-0082**.

Sincerely,  
Ella Ennis  
Legislative Chairman  
Maryland Federation of Republican Women