



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Health and Government Operations Committee
on
Senate Bill 101
March 21, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to advocate for access to adequate and appropriate health care for all Marylanders. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with congregations in three judicatories within our State.

Our community supports access to appropriate and adequate health care for all people in the United States: *We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have an enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people as a shared endeavor*, we said in our “Caring for Health” statement of 2003. So, we support **Senate Bill 101** because it can expand access to care in Maryland by implementing a coordinated care model for people receiving Maryland Medical Assistance.

Our understanding of “appropriate” and “adequate” applied to health care is that human life is an integrity of *soma* and *pysche*, body *and* spirit. Indeed, disorders labeled “behaviorial” present as physical, that is acts with the body. Many psychological distresses are accompanied by, or present as, bodily distresses. For that reason, our community advocates *access to a basic level of preventive, acute, and chronic physical and mental health care at an affordable cost.*

Maryland has conducted a pilot in a care delivery model (Collaborative Care Model) in several State locations, following legislation from the 2018 session. The model integrates delivery of primary health care with behavioral/mental health services. A General Assembly report of February 2022 indicates that the model can improve outcomes for patients and achieve efficiency in the health care delivery system. It likely covers gaps in clinical practice.

Senate Bill 101 proposes making the delivery procedures of the CoCM pilot a care standard in Maryland’s Medicaid program. We applaud and support this. Integrating care in this way is appropriate because the human condition is an integrity of body and spirit. For that reason, we encourage a favorable report for the successful care model advanced by **Senate Bill 101**.

Lee Hudson