



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 7

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Senator Melony Griffith  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**SUBJECT: Support SB 362**

Dear Chairwoman Griffith and Members of the Finance Committee,

I write in support of SB 362, authorizing the Maryland Department of Health to seek an amendment to the State plan to allow for reimbursement for services at established certified community behavioral health clinics.

The demands for mental and behavioral health care have risen dramatically while access to services has remained stagnant. The language of SB 362 prioritizes person-centered care, overall preventative medical care, and targeted case management, among other critically-needed services. The community behavioral health clinic model and the mandatory crisis services associated with the model will assist with delivering desperately-needed services in a prompt, coordinated fashion meeting individuals where they are and when they need the services.

As of this year, Montgomery County has a total of 187 licensed acute psychiatric beds in its hospitals with a population of more than one million people. Although the capacity for acute care has more than doubled since 2019, we still cannot accommodate everyone who needs care. For example, in 2019 there were only 70 acute psychiatric beds with 19,673 patient days of usage. We need greater flexibility to get people into care before they reach crisis level and to reduce reliance upon acute care facilities for long-term treatment.

The need is urgent. While I appreciate that Maryland will be subject to the approval of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services prior to implementation of these community-based clinics, we must act swiftly and fully engage our federal partners in bringing this to bear for our residents.

Sincerely,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Luedtke', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Dawn Luedtke,  
Councilmember, District 7  
Montgomery County