

**Senate Finance Committee
February 13, 2024**

Senate Bill 124: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits - Coverage and Reimbursement

*****SUPPORT*****

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, an organization representing social workers statewide, is asking for your support for Senate Bill 124 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits - Coverage and Reimbursement.

Through academic research, media coverage, and society-wide personal experiences, Maryland citizens are fully aware of the mental health crisis looming in our state. To mitigate, this crisis requires multifaceted habilitative and rehabilitative approaches. This bill begins the conversation on properly supporting mental health by identifying mental health needs earlier; thereby, possibly circumventing or reducing psychosocial consequences brought on by unrecognized mental health problems.

To promote a seamless habilitation clinical encounter for patients, we support amendments to define what a wellness assessment is, as we recognize there are many screening tools available. These screening tools are important, but no the same as an assessment where a clinician can determine whether or not there is a diagnosable disorder that would require treatment. For those without a diagnosable disorder, the provider and their patient can create a prevention plan.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 124.

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