



**MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE**

**February 13, 2024**

**SB 124**

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Annual Behavioral Health  
Wellness Visits – Coverage and Reimbursement**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 124. The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 124 would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, along with other providers and health plans, to provide coverage and reimbursement for annual behavioral health wellness visits. It is vitally important to recognize the importance of caring for both the physical and mental well-being of our community.

The Catholic Church emphasizes the dignity of every human person and the call to promote the common good. Mental health is an integral part of an individual's well-being, and providing accessible and comprehensive coverage for behavioral health services is aligned with the principles of justice and compassion. Mental health challenges affect individuals and families across all walks of life, and it is our moral obligation to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to receive necessary care. Annual behavioral health wellness visits are crucial for early detection, prevention, and intervention, contributing to the overall health and stability of individuals and the broader community.

Allowing for coverage of these visits affirms a commitment to recognize the full spectrum of human health, both physical and mental and reflects a compassionate response to the struggles many individuals face in silence, addressing the stigma associated with mental health issues and promoting a culture of understanding and support.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 124.