



**Montgomery County Federation of Families for  
Children's Mental Health, Inc.**

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**SB 124 Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Annual Behavioral Health  
Wellness Visits - Coverage and Reimbursements**

Senate Finance Committee

February 13, 2024

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

I am Celia Serkin, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc. (MC Federation of Families), a family peer support organization serving diverse families in Montgomery County who have children, youth, and/or young adults with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring challenges. Our Certified Family Peer Specialists are parents who have raised or are currently raising children with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring challenges. I am a Montgomery County resident and have two children, now adults, who have struggled since childhood with mental health challenges. My son has debilitating depression. My daughter has co-occurring challenges.

MC Federation of Families is pleased to support **SB 124 Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits - Coverage and Reimbursements.**

SB 124 requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and certain health insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage and certain reimbursement for annual behavioral health wellness visits.

MC Federation of Families supports SB 124 because it will ensure that Marylanders have access to an annual behavioral health wellness visit, which is a clinical encounter during which a health care practitioner conducts an assessment to identify whether a patient meets criteria for a psychiatric or substance use disorder. SB 124 will put mental health and substance use on par with other routinely covered preventive health services, such as an annual physical or cancer screening. The human cost of unaddressed trauma is high. Unaddressed trauma leads to lifelong mental health challenges, substance use disorders, higher rates of incarceration, and negative health behaviors, including suicide. Untreated mental health and substance use challenges impact a person's physical health and create costly and negative outcomes over the course of a lifetime. These costs and negative outcomes ripple throughout our health care system, our criminal justice system, and our economy at large.

MC Federation of Families urges this committee to pass SB 124.