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Favorable Bill HB576

Abila Tazanu, M.D.

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I am a Maryland citizen, mother of children with developmental delays and co-occurring mental health challenges, and a pediatrician who is concerned about improving treatment for those with a serious mental illness (SMI) - one of our most vulnerable populations. It is critical to support this bill as so many lives are at stake, both the lives of those affected and the loved ones and communities that struggle to support them. Maryland needs to establish a strong, evidenced-based assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) program that reduces homelessness, hospitalizations, arrests, incarceration, trauma, and suicide for those with a SMI. AOT save lives!

While it is sadly too late for some with a SMI, please see the February 5, Baltimore Sun Op-Ed about the loss of life at: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/02/05/maryland-assisted-outpatient-treatment/>, passing an AOT bill will save the lives of others with a SMI.

It is time for Maryland to join the 47 other states that have laws to authorize an AOT program.

Please give a favorable report to HB576.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Abila Tazanu".

Abila Tazanu, M.D.

Director, Pediatrician and Mother of Children with Autism