



# BROOK LANE

Hope Healing • Recovery

Written Testimony

Senate Finance Committee

House Health and Government Operations Committee

## **HB804: Certificate of Need – Psychiatric Health Care Facilities and Psychiatric and Mental Health Services – Exemption**

February 28, 2024

Position: **Oppose**

Brook Lane opposes HB804: Certificate of Need – Psychiatric Health Care Facilities and Psychiatric and Mental Health Services – Exemption.

Brook Lane believes the elimination of the Certificate of Need (CON) process for psychiatric hospital beds and psychiatric services removes critical regulatory and oversight practices that can ensure sustainability of new services, verifies that the services established are appropriate for a specific geographic area and validates the new organization has the expertise and capabilities to provide high quality care.

The legislation in question proposes to remove this structured process. In the absence of this process, we believe that the healthcare environment in Maryland may be negatively impacted by the entry of providers without the skill, resources, knowledge base, and expertise to safely and effectively operate a mental health hospital system. Given the mission to care for Maryland's most in need as well as the ongoing behavioral health crisis, we strongly believe that this bill would not improve access to care, but rather reduce the quality of behavioral healthcare overall. We recommend opposing the passage of this legislation, and are willing to collaborate with the State legislature to assist in designing legislation in the interest of improving behavioral health access to care in Maryland.

### **About Brook Lane**

Brook Lane is western Maryland's largest, non-profit mental health system. The main campus in Hagerstown, MD is home to the second largest freestanding psychiatric hospital in Maryland. Our 58 bed hospital, serving children, adolescents, and adults, as well as our comprehensive continuum of outpatient services has been meeting the mental health needs of the state for 75 years.

Sincerely,

Jeffery D. O'Neal, MBA, LCPC, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer