

OFFICERS

ELIZABETH GREEN
President

ROBIN WEIMAN
1st Vice President

AMALIA HONICK

BENJAMIN ROSENBERG

RABBI STEVEN SCHWARTZ

RABBI JONATHAN SEIDEMANN

MELANIE SHAPIRO

RABBI ANDREW BUSCH
Past President

HOWARD LIBIT
Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Adat Chaim Congregation
American Jewish Committee
Americans for Peace Now
Baltimore Chapter
American Israel Public Affairs Committee
American Red Magen David for Israel
American Zionist Movement
Amit Women
Association of Reform Zionists of America
Baltimore Board of Rabbis
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance
Baltimore Men's ORT
Baltimore Zionist District
Beth Am Congregation
Beth El Congregation
Beth Israel Congregation
Beth Shalom Congregation of
Howard County
Beth Tfiloh Congregation
B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region
B'nai Israel Congregation
B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation
Bolton Street Synagogue
Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation
Chizuk Amuno Congregation
Congregation Beit Tikvah
Congregation Tiferes Yisroel
Federation of Jewish Women's
Organizations of Maryland
Hadassah
Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation
J Street
Jewish Federation of Howard County
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish War Veterans
Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary
Jewish Women International
Jews For Judaism
Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah
Hebrew Congregation
National Council of Jewish Women
Ner Tamid Congregation
Rabbinical Council of America
Religious Zionists of America
Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
Shomrei Emunah Congregation
Suburban Orthodox Congregation
Temple Beth Shalom
Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**House Bill 400 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance -
Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits - Coverage and Reimbursement
Health and Government Operations Committee – February 8, 2023
SUPPORT**

Background: HB400 would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and health insurers to provide coverage for annual behavioral health wellness visits, regardless of whether a diagnosis is made at the end of the visit.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Jewish Community Services (JCS), which offers programs and services for people of all ages and backgrounds, helping them achieve their goals, enhance their wellbeing, and maximize their independence. JCS currently provides therapy and medication management to a large population of clients with both commercial and public insurance. These behavioral health intervention services are incredibly helpful in enhancing patient wellbeing. During 2023, JCS performed 225 Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits.

One in five Marylanders suffer from a mental health condition, and only a fraction receive the help they need. As mental and behavioral health continue to be at the forefront of our state's focus, it is important that individuals can receive care. Currently, if an individual has a behavioral health assessment from a behavioral health provider and there is no mental illness diagnosis as a result of the appointment, the appointment will not be covered by insurance. Just as we are afforded an annual physical, we should also have access to an annual behavioral health assessment.

The Jewish community historically takes communal responsibility for the vulnerable and underserved – this includes those in poverty; individuals with disabilities; victims of domestic violence, etc. Many of these individuals need readily accessible, high-quality mental and behavioral health services. By targeting early intervention in mental illness, we are removing the stigma around mental health diagnoses; saving money for patients; and providing access to needed care.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB400.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies, and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.