



February 26, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
House Health & Government Operations Committee  
Room 241 - House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – House Bill 1019: Mental Health Law - Petitions for Emergency Evaluation

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS/WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 1019: Mental Health Law - Petitions for Emergency Evaluation. When a clinician goes to the trouble of filing an emergency petition, it means that the person is truly a danger to self and/or others and should be evaluated in the emergency department. HB 1019 wisely extends the time to serve an emergency petition by five days after its expiration date. Under current law, five days is not always a long enough time to locate a patient, especially one who has absconded.

For all the reasons above, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 1019. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee