



March 6, 2024

Chair Pena Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

When the bill to establish the Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access passed in 2023, NAMI MD was excited to get to work, as we're already heavily involved with the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee. However, once the Commission convened, we realized that some of the efforts between the two entities may be duplicative. We feel that it is in the best interest of the State to have both the Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access Commission and the BHAC working together, in coordination, to ensure that Maryland's behavioral health care services are appropriate, accessible, and comprehensive across the State.

We urge a favorable report.

Kathryn S. Farinholt  
Executive Director  
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

**Contact:** Morgan Mills  
Compass Government Relations  
Mmills@compassadvocacy.com