



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 804: Certificate of Need - Psychiatric Health Care Facilities and Psychiatric and Mental Health Services - Exemption

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 804: Certificate of Need - Psychiatric Health Care Facilities and Psychiatric and Mental Health Services – Exemption as it removes red tape required to expand mental health services. The intention of a certificate of need law is to reduce the cost of care by ensuring that a new facility does not duplicate something that already exists. In practice, however, the certificate of need law could prevent the building of a standalone psychiatric hospital if the general hospital has a small ten bed psych unit, despite an overwhelming need for a full psychiatric hospital.

Put simply, Maryland needs more psychiatric beds, and therefore, Maryland needs HB 804 to facilitate that happening. For all the reasons above, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 804. 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