



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)

To Ways and Means Committee

Chair: Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary

March 5, 2024

House Bill 1372: Health and Taxation - Digital Social Media Services and the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA), is in SUPPORT of House Bill 1372: Health and Taxation - Digital Social Media Services and the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth

The Maryland Regional Health Association prioritizes mental health for children. We fully support the legislation as long as it does not impact the state's existing mental health priorities.

Abrams 2023 says that the COVID-19 pandemic era ushered in a new set of challenges for youth in the United States, leading to a mental health crisis as declared by the United States Surgeon General just over a year ago. But U.S. children and teens have been suffering for far longer.

In the ten years leading up to the pandemic, feelings of persistent sadness and hopelessness—as well as suicidal thoughts and behaviors—increased by about 40% among young people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System](#).

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,
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<https://timeforge.com/blog/what-is-workforce-readiness/>