



March 11, 2024

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

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary  
Ways & Means Committee  
House Office Building - Room 131  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Oppose – HB 65: Public Schools - Medical and Psychological Treatment in School-Based Health Centers and Public Schools - Parental Notice

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Chair Atterbeary, and Honorable Members of the Committees:

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 and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS oppose House Bill 65: Public Schools - Medical and Psychological Treatment in School-Based Health Centers and Public Schools - Parental Notice (HB 65). The existing law serves a crucial purpose, allowing school-based clinicians to extend vital medical and psychological support to vulnerable populations, particularly LGBTQ youth who may lack parental support. Under current provisions, clinicians possess the discretion to determine when involving guardians is clinically necessary. While MPS/WPS previously contested the law's age of consent of twelve, advocating for guardian involvement due to the importance of comprehensive care, HB 65 represents a severe overreaction. It effectively strips youths, including sixteen and seventeen-year-olds who have long been deemed capable of providing consent, of their autonomy. For countless LGBTQ youth, this legislation threatens to deter them from seeking essential treatment or exacerbate familial tensions. Our practitioners consistently strive to foster parental or guardian involvement, yet such decisions must ultimately rest with clinicians, who are best equipped to assess the intricate balance of risks and benefits. HB 65 jeopardizes this delicate balance and undermines the well-being of our youth.

Therefore, MPS/WPS ask this committee for an unfavorable report on HB 65. If you have any questions concerning 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