



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



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TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Jamila J. Woods

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 400 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Annual Behavioral Health Wellness Visits – Coverage and Reimbursement*

On behalf of The Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, and the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 400.

House Bill 400 requires health insurance carriers to provide coverage for an annual behavioral health wellness visit, regardless of whether the assessment results in a behavioral health diagnosis. A carrier must also provide payment for the visit on the same basis and at the same rate as an assessment that results in a behavioral health diagnosis.

House Bill 400 advances the goals of the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, which prohibits discriminatory insurance coverage for those with mental health or substance abuse disorders. This bill continues to advance the goals of the federal Act and ensures that coverage and payment is equal in scope to physical health coverage. In addition, House Bill 400 also provides consumers with an additional, covered avenue to seek care early, which has been shown to lead to better health outcomes. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in 2021, there were an estimated 57.8 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States with a mental illness, with young adults aged 18-25 years with the highest prevalence compared to adults aged 26-49 years (28.1%) and aged 50 and older (15.0%). House Bill 400 is a needed coverage change to ensure that Maryland consumers have access to the health care, both physical and behavioral, that is needed. We urge a favorable vote.