

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

Hello Chairperson Vanessa Atterbeary and Vice Chairperson Jheanelle Wilkins, Committee Members and guests. My name is Sharon Blinder Hill. I am here to oppose House Bill 65.

During the 2021 legislative session, Governor Hogan allowed into law a bill to let minors 12 years old to 16 years to “seek mental and emotional health care without their parent or guardians’ consent.” This bill provides an avenue for children in abusive family situations to seek help. It also provides an important avenue for youths who have families who are embarrassed or culturally blocked from allowing their children to receive mental health services.

Social workers, mental health practitioners and child psychologists have noted that youngsters, particularly around middle school and high school, often become reticent to share their emotional distress in front of their guardians and parents. If the youth know that their parents must be informed about their children’s efforts to seek treatment, it can often inhibit them from doing so. This delay in providing them with treatment options can be further damaging to their emotional health and well being.

It is important to note that minors under the age of 16 cannot be prescribed psychiatric medication without their parents and/or guardians consent.

Please vote NO on HB 65.