

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Wes Moore
Governor

Vincent Schiraldi
Secretary

Date: February 28, 2024
Bill Number/Title: SB 732 - Department of Juvenile Services and Maryland Department of Health –
Inpatient Program for Children
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
DJS Position: Oppose

SB 732 requires the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to establish a residential program for youth adjudicated delinquent to provide rehabilitation, comprehensive care, and holistic therapies that address health, mental health, and substance abuse issues.

This bill is unnecessary, as DJS provides residential and community-based services to youth adjudicated delinquent. DJS operates three treatment programs for adjudicated youth, all of which provide mental health services, substance use treatment, medical services, and prosocial activities. Moreover, DJS contracts with in-state and out-of-state residential programs that provide comprehensive treatment services. Finally, DJS operates a continuum of community-based services to include mental health, substance use, family counseling, and mentoring programs.

DJS supports the premise of SB 732. However, SB 732 is not the vehicle to expand treatment options. A collaborative approach, involving all child-serving agencies is necessary to ensure that all children, regardless of agency involvement, should have access to supportive and appropriate treatment options. DJS is committed to partnering with MDH to find new and creative strategies to ensure access to residential substance use treatment, mental health services, and holistic services.

For these reasons the department respectfully requests an unfavorable report.