



March 5, 2024

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

RE: Support – HB 1372: Health and Taxation - Digital Social Media Services and the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and Honorable Members of the Committee:

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 support House Bill 1372: Health and Taxation - Digital Social Media Services and the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth (HB 1372). The establishment of the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth, financed through a tax on select digital social media services, represents a significant stride towards guaranteeing access to vital mental health care services for children and youth. The prevalence of mental health issues among this demographic has escalated to concerning levels, exacerbated by factors like social media engagement, cyberbullying, and the stressors of contemporary living. By instituting a dedicated fund, Maryland would signal its commitment to prioritizing the mental well-being of our future generation, ensuring they receive the necessary support and care to flourish.

For all the reasons stated above, MPS/WPS ask this committee for a favorable report on HB 1372. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee