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February 28, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barns
Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support: HB1480: Child Advocacy Centers - Continuity of Care Standards for Health Care Professionals and Reports of Violations

Dear Chairman Barns & 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/WPS represent over 1100 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

Considering the vulnerability of the population served in Child Advocacy Centers, it is critical that the services provided are standardized, monitored and delivered via well-trained staff. Requiring licensed therapists in CACs is an important step in the right direction. In addition, developing processes for monitoring and reporting on services will move the care that is provided in CACs towards a standard that is present in mental health centers.

MPS/WPS, therefore, ask this honorable committee for a favorable report on HB 1480. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society & Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee