

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 11, 2025

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The Honorable William C. Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support With Amendment – SB 741: Forensic Mental Health Treatment

Dear Chairman Smith 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 1100 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

Presently if an incompetent defendant is not transferred to a hospital within ten days, MDH is levied a daily fine which gets paid back to the detention center. This bill would require the money to go into a fund instead, for the purpose of building revenue to expand forensic bed capacity. It also requires a certificate of need for the closure of any forensic beds.

As written, the task force does not require the involvement of a forensic psychiatrist. The MPS/WPS supports this bill with the proposed amendment of adding a forensic psychiatrist to the task force participants.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

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