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February 7, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair  
Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

### **Bill: Senate Bill 486: School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers**

### **Position: Support with Amendment**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, is writing in SUPPORT with an amendment of Senate Bill 486: School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers.

Maryland's schools are facing an increasingly serious shortage of qualified behavioral and physical health care providers – at a time when their need is becoming ever more apparent. Students cannot effectively meet the academic demands of school if these needs are not addressed. Recognizing this fact, Maryland's school systems have for many years employed school nurses, counselors, social workers, psychologists and other related service providers, and their services make a big difference. But today schools are having a harder and harder time finding enough professionals to fill all these positions, and across the state many remain unfilled.

To address these shortages, it's essential to have good data. SB 486 will generate regular assessments of the adequacy of our school health and wellness workforce, enabling planners at every level to understand the extent of the problem and to develop effective long-term solutions to the identified shortages.

Noting that the bill adds a "School Health Nurse" as a member of the Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care, we think that it is very important for a qualified mental health professional to be included as well. We propose the following amendment at page 3, line 19: "... SCHOOL HEALTH NURSES; AND ... (XV) ONE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION."

Thank you for considering our comments on SB 486, with the proposed amendment. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of MPA's Legislative Committee, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

*David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.*  
David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.  
President

*Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.*  
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs