



Senate Bill 592

Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance and Budget & Taxation Committees

Date: February 18, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson and Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 592, which establishes the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs to enhance behavioral health services statewide.

Counties are on the front lines of behavioral health service delivery, working closely with providers to meet the growing demand for high-quality mental health and substance use disorder treatment. SB 592 provides a dedicated funding stream—derived from civil penalties collected by the Maryland Department of Health from behavioral health programs—to invest in training, grant awards, demonstration projects, and other initiatives aimed at improving behavioral health care quality.

By ensuring that these funds are reinvested into community-based programs, this bill strengthens local efforts to provide effective and sustainable behavioral health services. Maryland’s counties recognize the importance of continuous quality improvement in this sector, and SB 592 offers a practical and necessary step toward that goal.

This bill provides counties and community-based providers with an opportunity to implement innovative strategies to enhance behavioral health outcomes. Investments in workforce development, service delivery models, and data-driven approaches will allow counties to address gaps in care, reduce disparities, and promote long-term stability in Maryland’s behavioral health system. With demand for services continuing to rise, this fund will be a critical tool in ensuring that all residents have access to the care they need.

For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 592.