

**SB592.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ashley Clark

Position: FAV

# MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 10, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support –Senate Bill 592: Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment

Dear Chairwoman Beidle 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.

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) strongly supports Senate Bill 592, which establishes the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs in the Maryland Department of Health to provide funding for training, grant awards, demonstration projects, or other purposes designed to improve behavioral health care services in the State. As we work to continue to bolster our continuum of community behavioral health services, it remains evident that our capacity to build the system of care is tenuous due to limited funding. Cuts to reimbursement rates in combination with higher salary requirements for mental health clinicians result in a financial gap that jeopardizes the viability of all service arms. Alternative sources of support, including grant funding, are critical to creating and sustaining community behavioral health programs to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Although the source of funding for the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Program is an area of concern, it is good to see that it is being proposed that the funds be reinvested back into behavioral health services

For these reasons, the Maryland Psychiatric Society urges a favorable report on SB 592.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at [lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com).

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

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# **SB0592 - Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund**

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq.  
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Amelie Bedard  
Policy Intern

Tuesday February 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**SENATE Bill #592:** Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for  
Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender community power-building organization for Maryland's trans community. Equitable access to healthcare is a core belief of ours, and we believe that this bill will provide much-needed funding for various initiatives designed to improve the quality of behavioral healthcare in Maryland, especially for transgender individuals, who are much more likely to face significant health disparities.

Establishing a community-based behavioral health fund ensures that the mental health and wellness of Maryland's most vulnerable communities won't be neglected for reasons such as socioeconomic status or zip code. Enhancing the quality of behavioral healthcare builds more resilient and supportive communities, and those who receive appropriate care are better equipped to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. Inclusive, equitable, and accessible healthcare benefits all Maryland residents, and this fund will support community-based practices where transgender people feel safe, respected, understood, and empowered in their well-being, and where the care provided is tailored and culturally competent.

Establishing this fund will also allow for better data collection on the effectiveness of behavioral health programs. Trans Maryland and other advocacy groups can use this data to push for further policy changes and improvements in the fields of healthcare and healthcare coverage.

For this reason, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 592.

# **SB0592\_FAV\_MedChi\_PH - Health Care Quality Fund fo**

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



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Senate Finance Committee

February 18, 2025

Senate Bill 592 – *Public Health – Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs – Establishment*

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, supports Senate Bill 592, which establishes the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs within the Maryland Department of Health.

This legislation takes an important step toward strengthening behavioral health services by ensuring that civil penalties collected from behavioral health programs are reinvested directly into initiatives that improve the quality of care. By funding training, grants, and demonstration projects, this bill will help enhance services for patients while supporting providers who deliver critical mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

Additionally, Senate Bill 592 guarantees that these funds supplement rather than replace existing funding, reinforcing Maryland’s long-term commitment to accessible, high-quality behavioral health care. For these reasons, MedChi urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 592.

**For more information call:**

Christine K. Krone  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Andrew G. Vetter  
410-244-7000

**SB0592\_MHAMD\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dan Martin

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 592 Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for  
Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment**

Finance Committee

February 18, 2025

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of Senate Bill 592.

SB 592 establishes a fund that may be used only for training, grant awards, demonstration projects, or other purposes designed to improve the quality of behavioral health care in Maryland. The fund would consist of civil monetary penalties (CMP) collected from behavioral health programs that are assessed by the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) or the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ). This would ensure that CMPs serve a greater function beyond just penalizing behavioral health providers; rather, these penalties would be reinvested into important workforce development and quality improvement initiatives.

Data from an [alarming new assessment](#) of Maryland's behavioral health workforce highlights an escalating crisis in access to mental health and substance use care. According to the report,<sup>1</sup> completed pursuant to legislation the General Assembly passed in 2023 ([SB 283/ HB 418](#)), the state's current behavioral health workforce is 50 percent smaller than necessary to meet today's demand, and 45 percent of the existing workforce is expected to leave the field by 2028.

The report recommends a range of strategies for addressing the workforce crisis, including greater support for paid education and training. The traditional model of training "on your own time" and "on your own dime" is limiting the behavioral health talent pool. Students are required to pay for their education or training out-of-pocket or through student loans, complete unpaid internships, pay ancillary costs for fees and books, navigate the certification and licensure pathway, then apply for paid employment. This model does not work for many adult-learners juggling second jobs and dependent care or low-income earners who cannot afford to do unpaid internships.

SB 592 would allow CMPs to be reinvested into important "earn and learn" opportunities, including apprenticeships, paid-internships, training stipends and more. It will bolster Maryland's behavioral health workforce, improve service quality, and increase access to care. For these reasons, MHAMD supports this bill and urges a favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup> *Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent*. Maryland Health Care Commission. October 2024.  
[https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2024/md\\_bh\\_workforce\\_rpt\\_SB283.pdf](https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2024/md_bh_workforce_rpt_SB283.pdf)

**SB 592\_BH Quality Fund\_BHSB\_FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



February 18, 2025

**Senate Finance Committee  
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

*SB 592 - Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment*

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

**Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB592 - Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment.** As the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) considers increasing the use of civil penalties, the General Assembly should ensure those funds are used to improve behavioral health care quality.

MDH recently issued an informal draft of revisions to COMAR 10.63. This regulation covers behavioral health licensure and oversight. BHSB strongly supports the effort to improve oversight and quality. There has been a concerning rise in the number of licensed providers and the proposed revisions will help, especially if they include new authorities for LBHAs.

The revisions specifically give MDH clear authority to levy civil penalties on providers who fail to meet the expectations included in the regulations. BHSB thinks is a reasonable tool for the state to use in holding providers accountable.

SB592 aims to make sure that revenue generated from civil penalties levied against providers remain in the public behavioral health system. The behavioral health system has been historically underfunded and the behavioral health needs of Marylanders have been on the rise. Dedicating revenue generated from behavioral health providers to improve quality within the system is a commonsense proposal that will improve the system overall without impacting state general funds.

The bill establishes the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs to hold behavioral health civil penalties separately and provide funding for training and other interventions to improve quality. This mechanism will improve behavioral health services in Maryland and ensure a high standard of care. **BHSB urges the Senate Finance Committee to pass SB592.**

***For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142***

**SB0592\_Testimony\_SenAugustine.pdf**

Uploaded by: Malcolm Augustine

Position: FAV

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE  
Legislative District 47  
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

Education, Energy and the  
Environment Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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February 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela G. Beidle

Chairwoman, Senate Finance Committee

3 East Miller Senate Office Building

11 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SB0592 - Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based  
Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment**

Position: **Favorable**

Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

**The Problem:**

- In a recent report on the Behavioral Workforce, the Maryland Health Care Commission found that the state has half the behavioral health workforce required to meet the current need or funding to support their training.<sup>1</sup>
- These shortages have led to service delays, increased workload for already overworked staff, and a diminished ability to meet the needs of Maryland's most vulnerable residents.
- There is a lack of oversight on if and how often the penalties are currently enforced, and the penalties are not guaranteed to go back into the behavioral health system.

**What SB0592 does:**

- The bill creates a new fund that prioritizes reinvestment of CMP funds into training, grants, and demonstration projects, directly improving patient care and provider compliance.

- This legislation follows Maryland’s existing approach for assisted living facilities and nursing homes.<sup>2</sup>
- This protects the levying of penalties from the appearance of a conflict of interest and ensures that penalties benefit community-based behavioral health programs in accordance with best practices for regulatory oversight and ethical governance.
- The bill is capped at \$10,00 per instance of violation.

**How SB0592 helps:**

- **It helps by creating a dedicated civil monetary penalty fund to support the behavioral health workforce by reinvesting fines rather than allowing them to be absorbed into the General Fund.**
- Allocating penalty funds for quality initiatives strengthens Maryland’s behavioral health system, ensuring patients receive safe, effective, and high-quality care.
- The non-lapsing fund structure guarantees that all penalty funds remain within the behavioral health system, preventing reallocation to unrelated state expenditures and ensuring transparency.
- In other states such as Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania have used similar funds to support mental health, opioid, and behavioral health educational or training funds to address the needs of their communities.<sup>3</sup>
- On the federal level, CMS has instituted a similar program for nursing homes and has seen positive health outcomes from their program.<sup>4</sup>
- Over \$75,000 was collected in penalties for a similar fund from Maryland State Assisted Living Violations.<sup>5</sup>
- A better trained workforce will ensure that more providers and workers are able to stay and thrive in Maryland, and reduces the amount of errors, delays, and provider burnout that is rampant at this time.
- This fund will ensure that there is funding available to support a higher standard of care for some of the most vulnerable populations.

**In summary, this bill represents a vital step in protecting and improving behavioral health workforce as well as improving health quality outcomes for Marylanders.**

**Chair Beidle and members of the committee, I ask for your favorable report.**



Sincerely,  
President Pro Tempore -- District 47 – Prince George’s County

Senator Malcolm Augustine

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1. Hall A, Korn A, Waller K, Shapiro J, PhD. Maryland behavioral health workforce review. . 2024. [https://marylandmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Full-Report\\_Maryland-BH-Workforce-Assessment-Final-Oct-2024.pdf](https://marylandmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Full-Report_Maryland-BH-Workforce-Assessment-Final-Oct-2024.pdf).
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3. Kirby J, Slone S, The Council of State Governments. Mental health insurance: State legislative and enforcement activities. . 2022. [https://www.csg.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/09/Mental\\_Health\\_Parity.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.csg.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/09/Mental_Health_Parity.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
4. Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. Civil money penalty reinvestment program. . 2023. Available from: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/quality-safety-oversight-general-information/civil-money-penalty-reinvestment-program>.
5. Maryland Office of Health Care Quality. Health care quality account grants program FY 2023 annual report. . 2023. [https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/docs/Reports/HCQA/MDH\\_Office\\_of\\_Health\\_Care\\_Quality\\_HCQA\\_Report%20FY\\_2023.pdf](https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/docs/Reports/HCQA/MDH_Office_of_Health_Care_Quality_HCQA_Report%20FY_2023.pdf).

# **CBH-FAV-SB592-Health Care Quality Fund for Communi**

Uploaded by: Nicole Graner

Position: FAV



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## Testimony on SB592

### Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs

February 18, 2025

Senate Finance Committee

#### POSITION: SUPPORT

The Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland (CBH) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 592. CBH is the leading voice for community-based providers serving the mental health and addiction needs of vulnerable Marylanders. Our 87 members serve the majority of individuals accessing care through Maryland's public behavioral health system. These providers deliver vital outpatient and residential treatment, day programs, case management, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), employment supports, and crisis intervention services to those in need.

Senate Bill 592 ensures civil monetary penalties (CMPs) imposed on behavioral health providers are reinvested into workforce development and quality improvement initiatives. Maryland's behavioral health system faces a severe workforce crisis that directly impacts access to essential mental health and substance use disorder services. The demand for behavioral health care has grown significantly, yet providers continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining qualified professionals. These shortages have led to service delays, increased caseloads for existing staff, and a diminished ability to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents. Without targeted intervention, this crisis will persist, exacerbating the challenges faced by both providers and the individuals they serve.

Senate Bill 592 takes a proactive approach to addressing this crisis by ensuring CMP funds are dedicated to workforce development and quality improvement. These funds will directly support training initiatives that equip behavioral health professionals with the necessary skills to provide high-quality care. Additionally, they will bolster recruitment and retention efforts, allowing providers to stabilize their workforce and expand service capacity. A structured reinvestment strategy is essential to prevent CMPs from unintentionally straining providers who are already facing financial and staffing hardships.

Allocating CMPs into a Health Care Quality fund ensures that they are not treated as a general revenue source but rather reinvested into behavioral health quality improvement efforts. This legislation follows Maryland's approach for assisted living facilities, ensuring that the use of these funds is transparent, accountable, and directly benefits community-based behavioral health providers.

Beyond penalties, this initiative leverages CMPs as a catalyst for continuous quality improvement. Funds will be directed toward training programs, grants, and innovative projects that enhance service delivery, strengthen provider compliance



with state regulations, and encourage best practices across the behavioral health system. By proactively addressing deficiencies through education and targeted support, Senate Bill 592 helps providers meet regulatory standards while fostering continual quality improvement. As amended, this bill will help ensure penalties remain focused on serious violations—such as operating without a license or failing to correct life-threatening deficiencies—while capping fines at \$10,000 per violation to avoid placing excessive financial burdens on providers.

By creating a structured and transparent reinvestment model, Senate Bill 592 will help strengthen Maryland’s behavioral health workforce, improve service quality, and increase access to care. It ensures that CMPs serve a constructive purpose, reinforcing provider accountability while enhancing patient outcomes.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 592.

For more information contact *Nicole Graner, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, at 240-994-8113 or [Nicole@MDCBH.org](mailto:Nicole@MDCBH.org)*

**SB0592-FIN\_MACo-SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FAV



## **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.

**SB592\_RHTC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



February 18, 2025

Senate Finance Committee & Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

**SB592 - Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs – Establishment**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

The Recovery Housing & Treatment Center Coalition of Maryland (RHTC) is honored to submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 592 (SB592), *Public Health – Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs – Establishment*.

RHTC is a coalition of recovery residences, group homes, treatment centers, and other critical services that form the backbone of Maryland’s continuum of care. Our mission is to educate policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public on the importance of maintaining and expanding recovery facilities and services in our state. We work to ensure that individuals in recovery have access to high-quality, stable housing and treatment options that support their long-term well-being and reintegration into the community.

SB592 establishes the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs, a dedicated funding source designed to improve the quality of behavioral health care through training, grant awards, and demonstration projects. This initiative directly aligns with RHTC’s goals of fostering a robust and sustainable recovery ecosystem throughout Maryland.

The fund will provide financial support for programs that directly impact individuals in recovery, including evidence-based treatment, peer support, and wraparound services that are vital for sustained success. The establishment of a nonlapsing fund ensures continuous investment in behavioral health programs, protecting them from budgetary fluctuations and enabling long-term planning and program development.

Additionally, by allocating funds to training initiatives, SB592 will empower service providers with the latest best practices in behavioral health, ensuring high standards of care across all facilities.

As a coalition that supports a broad range of recovery services, we recognize that investment in community-based behavioral health programs strengthens the entire continuum of care, allowing individuals in recovery to receive comprehensive and coordinated support.



Expanding and improving behavioral health services benefits not just those in recovery but also their families, employers, and local communities. A well-funded recovery infrastructure reduces homelessness, criminal justice involvement, and hospitalizations, leading to cost savings and improved public health outcomes for the state.

For these reasons, RHTC strongly urges the General Assembly to pass SB592. The establishment of the Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs is a significant step forward in ensuring that Maryland remains a leader in providing accessible, high-quality recovery support services.

We thank you for your time and consideration and look forward to collaborating on initiatives that advance the health and well-being of individuals in recovery across the state.

For more information call or email:

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