



Maryland Community Health System

Bill Number:	Senate Bill 790 – Behavioral Health Advisory Council and the Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment Access – Plan to Implement Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Requirements
Committee:	House Health and Government Operations Committee
Hearing Date:	March 26, 2025
Position:	Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *Senate Bill 790 – Maryland Department of Health – Workgroup to Implement Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Requirements*. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to convene a workgroup to implement Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment requirements for children.

As a network of federally qualified health centers, we provide primarily, behavioral, and dental services to underserved communities. With rising rates of behavioral health issues among children, we are supportive of measures to lift barriers to care. Many of our patients are covered through Medicaid. To receive coverage of behavioral health services, their providers need to render a behavioral health diagnosis within the first three appointments. For clinicians, it can take more than three visits with a young child to render an accurate behavioral health visit. With the recent guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on the Best Practices for Adhering to EPSDT Requirements, the path to intervening early with young children is more clearly paved, as the guidance states that “States should avoid requiring an EPSDT-eligible child to have a specific behavioral health diagnosis for the provision of services, as screenings may identify symptoms that require attention but do not meet diagnostic criteria”.¹ This bill will take us one step closer to complying with those best practices.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

¹ [SHO # 24-005_Best Practices for Adhering to Early and Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment \(EPSDT\) Requirements.pdf](#)