



Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long-Term Care

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

19 February 2025

HB743 – Public Health - Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs - Establishment

Madam Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.
Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 743.

Maryland has a robust behavioral health system that serves our constituents well; however, even the best systems of care have providers that fall out of compliance with State law. In those instances, fines may be levied against providers as punishment for violating the law. These fines are known legally as Civil Monetary Penalties (CMPs), and funds attained from these penalties assessed against behavioral health providers are, under current law, allocated to the General Fund. The purpose of a CMP is to encourage corrective behavior, and bring providers back to compliance; while the fine itself is incentive to prevent our providers from falling out of compliance with the law, Maryland is currently missing an opportunity to ensure those funds can be used for further measures to ensure compliance, bolster our behavioral health system, and improve health outcomes. HB743 provides a solution by creating a special fund to be used for improving behavioral health programs, and assigning CMPs to that fund.

By directing CMPs collected from behavioral health providers into a new Health Care Quality Fund, HB743 ensures a mechanism for reinvestment into our behavioral health system. This fund will be tightly focused on funding training, grant awards, and demonstrations to improve behavioral health services, moving us closer to a higher quality of care. Moreover, HB743 provides a mechanism for innovation by funding programs that test and refine new strategies to improve behavioral health outcomes, ensuring that Maryland leads in the development of community-centered care models.

The Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration already provides critical training and technical assistance to behavioral health providers, including programs on mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and trauma-informed care.¹ Similarly, non-profit organizations like the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition are actively working to improve service quality through training and quality improvement initiatives such as the Mental Health First Aid Maryland². However, these efforts often face funding limitations, which HB743 seeks to address by creating a new funding source.

¹ <https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/Index.aspx>

² <https://www.mhamd.org/what-we-do/training/mental-health-first-aid-maryland/>

By establishing a dedicated fund for community-based behavioral health programs, we have the ability to achieve improved health outcomes and quality of care for Marylanders. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB743.