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February 11, 2025

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB 869 – Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025**  
**Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Senate Finance Committee to **FAVORABLY report on HB 869**.

We urge the Committee to support policies which increase access to therapy and substance use services. We ask that the Committee, therefore, ensure that telehealth therapy services continue to be reimbursed at the same rate as in-person therapy sessions. The effectiveness of virtual therapy is well-documented, and it has become a crucial resource for individuals who face barriers to in-person care, such as those in rural areas, individuals with disabilities, and those with limited transportation. Paying therapists less for telehealth services discourages providers from joining insurance panels which then limits access to mental health care. Equal reimbursement rates will ensure that therapists can continue to join insurance panels and provide care to those who need it most, without financial disincentives that reduce availability.

HB 869 also maintains the policy that audio-only therapy sessions continue to be reimbursed and included as telehealth services. Many individuals, especially those in underserved communities, lack access to reliable internet or video-capable devices and still require mental health support. Audio-only therapy ensures that those without broadband access, older adults unfamiliar with video technology, and individuals in crisis who may not have privacy for a video session can still receive essential care. Mental health treatment should be accessible to all, regardless of technological or financial barriers. By supporting payment parity for telehealth therapy and ensuring audio-only services remain covered, we can create a more equitable and effective mental health care system.

We urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB 869**. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D. 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