

February 19, 2025

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and distinguished members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on HB743.

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

Maryland's mental and behavioral health system is in dire need of additional funding to improve several aspects of behavioral health in the state. HB743 provides a mechanism to fund training, demonstration projects, and grants through fines collected from behavioral health programs as a constructive use of money that can improve the system without necessarily relying on additional revenue streams or tax increases. It will reinvest penalties to improve behavioral health outcomes in a transparent manner.

NAMI Maryland's members and others living with mental health conditions and/or caring for someone with mental health conditions will benefit from any improvements to access, safety, and quality of care. This effective use of penalty funds will be a step towards getting Marylanders the behavioral health system that they want and deserve.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB743.

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