

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



a

OFFICERS 2024-2025

Theodora G. Balis, M.D.
President

Ronald F. Means, M.D.
President-Elect

Tyler Hightower, M.D.
Secretary-Treasurer

Carol Vidal, M.D., Ph.D.
Council Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Meagan H. Floyd

COUNCIL

Benedicto R. Borja, M.D.
Kim L. Bright, M.D.
Mary Cutler, M.D.
Mark S. Komrad, M.D.
Cynthia Major Lewis, M.D.
Rachna S. Raisinghani, M.D.
Traci J. Speed, M.D., Ph.D.
Michael A. Young, M.D., M.S.

EARLY CAREER PSYCHIATRIST COUNCILOR

Jamie D. Spitzer, M.D.

RESIDENT-FELLOW MEMBER COUNCILOR

Hannah Paulding, M.D.

PAST PRESIDENTS

Virginia L. Ashley, M.D.
Jessica V. Merkel-Keller, M.D.

APA ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES

Annette L. Hanson, M.D.
Elias K. Shaya, M.D.
Brian Zimnitzky, M.D.

MEDCHI DELEGATE

Enrique I. Oviedo, M.D.

APA AREA 3 TRUSTEE

Geetha Jayaram, M.D.

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support –House Bill 672: School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk 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 MPS and WPS supports House Bill 672, School Health and Wellness Personnel Assessment and Maryland Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers. School-Based Mental health services are becoming more and more accepted across the country to increase access to mental health among youth. In addition, while some schools have many resources, others are under-resourced, and we feel it would be beneficial to have regular assessments to make sure all Maryland schools are well-equipped with wellness/health services. We believe that it would be helpful if this assessment was communicated publicly for transparency (so that parents and community members can easily see what is available and what is not in their schools and communities) and we urge legislators to consider next steps to ensure sure all services provided in schools are evidence-based and well-regulated.

For all the reasons stated above, MPS/WPS ask this committee for a favorable report on HB 672. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

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