

January 28, 2024

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

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on HB11.

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.

The General Assembly passed legislation in 2022 to prevent people living with serious mental illness (SMI) and substance use disorder (SUD) from paying higher costs when they are forced to seek treatment out of their insurer's network. That legislation made it possible for more Marylanders to access the healthcare services and medications they need. However, those important protections are set to expire in 2025. NAMI Maryland supports HB11 to permanently extend the balance billings provisions currently in place.

People living with mental health conditions face numerous obstacles to accessing healthcare, community services, housing, and other basic needs that many people take for granted. The General Assembly removed a major barrier to accessing mental health treatment in 2022 and allowing your earlier efforts to sunset would have the effect of returning an obstacle to mental healthcare services.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB11.

Kathryn S. Farinholt  
Executive Director  
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

**Contact:** Morgan Mills  
Compass Government Relations  
Mmills@compassadvocacy.com