



ON OUR OWN  
OF MARYLAND

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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF PRESERVE TELEHEALTH ACT OF 2025

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Thank you Chair Pena-Melynk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and committee members for your commitment to improving the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for Marylanders, especially community members who experience significant behavioral health challenges. On Our Own of Maryland (OOOMD) is a nonprofit behavioral health education and advocacy organization, operating for 30+ years by and for people with lived experience of mental health and substance use recovery.

We represent a statewide network of 16 peer-operated Wellness & Recovery Organizations, which collectively serve nearly 7,000 people living with behavioral health disabilities. Many are unhoused or experience significant financial barriers.

**OOOMD is in strong support of HB 869**, which would require Medicaid to continue telehealth services for medically necessary somatic, dental, or behavioral health services. This bill authorizes healthcare coverage for behavioral health services to be provided by video or audio, sustaining access to these different modes of support that Maryland residents want and need.

Ensuring full coverage for telehealth behavioral health services helps reduce barriers associated with mobility, transportation, employment, childcare, and other situations that can prevent or complicate in-person attendance. By allowing appointment flexibility, telehealth can support regular participation in treatment amidst complex or changeable life circumstances. For some, telehealth provides an option for accessing care with a greater measure of privacy and safety within their homes, and can make it possible to connect with a non-local provider with knowledge, skills, or modalities uniquely suited to their needs.

Importantly, this bill will allow audio-only telehealth to continue, a critical step toward bridging the digital divide. Many Marylanders within our statewide peer network lack access to reliable internet and sufficient data plans. Without the option to receive audio-only telehealth visits, vulnerable populations who are most in need of services will lose access to care.

**We urge a favorable report on HB 869.** Thank you.