

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



January 28, 2025

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

RE: Support – HB 1083: Maryland Department of Health - Workgroup to Implement Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Requirements

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.

To prevent adverse childhood experiences and the lifelong repercussions, it is critical that healthcare providers bolster early childhood intervention strategies as primary prevention measures. These early interventions not only result in prevention and early identification of mental illness but also ultimately decrease the long-term burden of mental illness over a lifetime. Indirectly, these interventions may also reduce academic failures, substance use and chronic medical illnesses into adulthood. Obvious benefits of early screening and interventions promote child and family mental health and well-being, which is ultimately beneficial for all.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this critical legislation. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

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