

March 11, 2025

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

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

HB1474 seeks to ensure continuity of care between a licensed therapist/counselor and their patients. Finding the 'right' therapist can be difficult and time consuming—and therapy is not a 'one size fits all' situation. It is important that an individual feels comfortable and safe with their therapist.

When a student moves out of State for college, that is a dramatic life change. Being in college is an exciting time, but the transition can be intimidating. It is important to ensure continuity of care for students with mental health conditions who are moving away to start school. Because a relationship with an existing therapist or counselor is a deeply personal one, many students feel most comfortable to continue their treatment plan with their current therapist. However, under current law, Maryland does not allow for out of State providers to offer telehealth visits.

By allowing our college students to continue their existing relationship with their therapist back home, we are taking a critical step in ensuring these students do not fall through the cracks when they are going through an enormous life transition.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.