



HB 543 – County Boards of Education-Substance Abuse Treatment-Student Information Disclosure Policy

Committee: Ways and Means

Date: 2/10/25

Position: FAV

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides family peer support services at no cost to families who have a loved one with mental health, substance use, or problem gambling disorder. Using their personal experience as parents, caregivers, and other loved ones, our staff provide emotional support, resource connection, and systems navigation, as well as support groups and educational training and workshops.

Last year, we served nearly 5,000 Families of a loved one with a behavioral health need. 15% of those families have a loved one with substance use and co-occurring disorders. We support this bill for the following reasons.

- HB 543 provides a practical solution to ensuring that students in need of substance use treatment receive the necessary support while maintaining their privacy and safety. By establishing a policy for disclosing student information from the school directory to detoxification centers or hospitals, prompt and appropriate medical intervention and treatment for the student can be given in a timely manner.
- Providing the option for parents to opt out of this disclosure respects the family's autonomy over their child's information.
- If opted in, this information can also help identify gaps for at-risk students in terms of what services and/or resources they may need in addition to substance use treatment. Providing a holistic approach



to their treatment. This can help with the youth's overall well-being and academic success and can lead to improved outcomes for the whole family.

Ashley Tauler, CA
Policy and Advocacy Manager
Family Peer Support Specialist
Maryland Coalition of Families
atauler@mdcoalition.org
Cell: 202.993.4685