

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 6, 2026

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The Honorable Ben Barns
Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support: House Bill 715: Algorithmic Addiction Fund – Establishment

Dear Chairman Barns & 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/WPS represent over 1200 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 715: Algorithmic Addiction Fund – Establishment. Algorithmic addiction refers to the compulsive use of digital devices and online platforms driven by algorithms that optimize user engagement and retention. This term encompasses addictive behaviors related to various online activities such as social media use, gaming, streaming services, and browsing the internet. Algorithmic addiction is characterized by a loss of control over one's online behavior, leading to excessive and often detrimental use of digital technologies. Individuals may find themselves spending excessive amounts of time online, neglecting real-life responsibilities, relationships, and activities. The addictive nature of digital platforms is often attributed to the algorithms that tailor content to user's preferences, creating a personalized and immersive online experience. These algorithms are designed to maximize user engagement by delivering content that is highly relevant and appealing to individuals, keeping them hooked for extended periods.

HB 715 seeks to create an algorithmic addiction fund that will then be used to conduct a statewide needs assessment to determine where resources are needed and best practices for algorithmic addiction prevention, intervention, and treatment, as well as outreach to primary and secondary school students about the dangers of algorithmic addiction. Ultimately, the fund may be expanded to provide much-needed youth mental health services, as young people are most impacted by algorithmic addiction.

Therefore, we ask for a favorable report on HB 715. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society & Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee