

Corporate Office:
166 W. Main Street
1st Floor
Norristown, PA 19401
610-239-9600



Regional Offices:

Eastern PA
1306 Spring Garden Street
5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-849-7200

Central PA
2930 Derry Street
Harrisburg, PA 17111
717-931-1988

Western PA:
414 West 5th Street
3rd Floor
Erie, PA 16507
814-746-4184

Maryland:
5 Crain Highway North
Suite 100
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
410-864-0695

Delaware:
3901 Philadelphia Pike
Claymont, DE 19703
410-864-0695



Washington, D.C.:
1949 4th Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
202-740-4429

Date: March 4, 2026

Committee: Senate Budget and Tax Committee

Bill: Senate Bill 284 (SB 284)- Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2026

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Gaudenzia offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 284 (SB 284).

Gaudenzia was founded in 1968 by a conscientious group of community members who wanted to help themselves and each other overcome the challenges of drug and alcohol use. They soon learned that a collective group was much stronger than an individual, struggling alone. Over the next 55 years, Gaudenzia began serving those in need of treatment for substance use and co-occurring disorders, becoming one of the nation's first providers with programs designed to meet the needs of individuals with substance use or co-occurring disorders, including those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS or under criminal justice involvement. Today, Gaudenzia is one of the largest non-profit substance use and co-occurring disorders treatment providers in the northeast United States, serving Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and the Washington, D.C. areas. More information is available at www.gaudenzia.org.

A Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) is a specially designated clinic that provides a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use services. CCBHCs serve anyone who walks through the door, regardless of their diagnosis and insurance status. CCBHCs are nonprofit organizations or units of a local government behavioral health authority. They must provide nine types of services, either directly or by contracting with partner organizations, with an emphasis on providing 24-hour crisis care, evidence-based practices, care coordination with local primary care and hospital partners, and integration with physical health care. CCBHCs dramatically increase access to care, expand the states' capacity to address the overdose crisis, reduce mental health-related hospitalizations, help address the workforce shortage, and create innovative partnerships with law enforcement, schools, and hospitals to improve care. Gaudenzia is currently one of six behavioral health providers participating in the State's CCBHC federal demonstration grant program, and we believe in the efficacy of this treatment model. Already in the first two years of the demonstration grant, we have served 561 individuals at our CCBHC location in the Park Heights neighborhood of Baltimore City. By the end of the 5-year demonstration grant, we expect to serve 2,100 clients.

SB 284 as drafted current states that the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) *may* apply to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at the Center for Mental Health Services for inclusion in the state certified community behavioral health clinic (CCBHC) demonstration program for fiscal year 2029. This language potentially weakens Maryland's current efforts to adopt CCBHCs. While the current grant cycle has been extended through December of 2026, and MDH has indicated that it plans to apply for the four-year CCBHC demonstration grant in April 2026, the current language of SB 284 does not give CCBHC providers confidence that the State is in fact committed to supporting CCBHC's in Maryland. We would ask that the bill be amended to align with MDH's stated intent and require MDH to reapply for the federal demonstration grant in fiscal year 2026.

For the aforementioned reasons, Gaudenzia respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments on SB 284.

Lauren C. Graziano, Director of Government Affairs
lauren.graziano@gaudenzia.org