



**Senate Budget & Tax Committee
March 4, 2026**

Testimony for Senate Bill 284 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2026

Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-MD) **strongly opposes the provision in the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2026 that reduces the annual appropriation to the Coordinated Community Supports Partnership fund to \$80 million** (Education §7-447.1, page 9).

The Maryland Consortium for Coordinated Community Supports (CCCS), a key component of the Blueprint legislation under the auspices of the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC), was created and funded to expand access to preventive, early- and acute-intervention behavioral health and wraparound services to students and their families. Services are provided in schools—where students are—and through community providers. The services address and work to remediate barriers to learning. Providentially, this program was authorized, funded, and ready to launch in an unanticipated post-pandemic spike in youth mental health need. That need continues.

On January 5, 2026, the CCCS released a report reviewing the progress on their statutory goals since grants were first awarded in FY2024. The report reflected the following:

Goal1: Expanded access to high-quality behavioral health and related services for students and families. Outcomes:

- \$200 million was granted in behavioral health programs
- 136,945 students were served in year one; 86% of Maryland schools were served; 167,000 students were served in year two
- 705 behavioral health workforce members were hired

Goal 2: Improve student wellbeing and readiness to learn. Outcomes:

- 80% of students who received prevention services demonstrated a desired behavioral outcome
- 64% of students who received targeted or intensive services demonstrated improvement

(over)

Goal 3: Foster positive classroom environments. Outcomes:

- 5,946 school staff trained in behavioral health practices to improve student outcomes
- 1,620 behavioral health providers trained in evidence-based programs

Goal 4: Promote sustainability through revenues from Medicaid, commercial insurance, hospital community benefit, and other funding sources. Outcomes:

- Medicaid consultant is assisting grantees with billing practices and advice on maximizing Medicaid benefits
- 22 grantees have leveraged other funding sources for an additional \$5 million to support their work

In a time of nascent rising academic scores in Maryland, it is imperative that we continue our efforts to remove behavioral health barriers to students' ability to access learning, and to ensure that they thrive as they graduate and move into the workforce. The proposed funding cut will result in a net 40% loss to the non-lapsing funding that the General Assembly originally enacted for this important work. We ask that you consider this closely in the process of budget reconciliation.

Maryland students continue to need the comprehensive, integrated, targeted behavioral health and wraparound services that the CCCS provides so that they can be attending school and sitting in their classrooms, taking full advantage of the education that the Blueprint envisions. **We strongly urge the General Assembly to reject this permanent reduction in funding to behavioral health services for our youth.**

Respectfully,

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