

SB0039_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/03/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0039- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Behavioral Health - Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics and Outpatient Mental Health Centers - Reimbursement Rates

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0039, **Behavioral Health - Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics and Outpatient Mental Health Centers - Reimbursement Rates**

As reported by Maryland Matters *Maryland needs another 30,000 behavioral health workers to meet growing demand - Recent report shows that Maryland's 'significant' shortage will worsen unless the state can boost the workforce*¹

Maryland is currently experiencing a significant mental health crisis, particularly among young people, with over 838,000 residents aged 12 and older struggling with mental health conditions. The crisis is characterized by long emergency department wait times, severe workforce shortages requiring over 30,000 new workers, and high rates of depression, especially in teenagers.²

Key aspects of the crisis include:

- **Youth Impact**
- **System Strain**
- **Workforce Shortage**
- **Budget Pressures**

The state is working to expand community-based care to reduce the reliance on institutionalization for children and youth.

This bill proposes actions to respond to the crisis. The bill will work by establishing the Workgroup on Certified Behavioral Health Clinic Implementation and Rate Methodology in the Behavioral Health Administration; requiring the Maryland Department of Health to conduct a certain rate study of outpatient mental health centers in the State; requiring the Department to increase the Maryland Medical Assistance Program reimbursement rate for outpatient mental health centers by 3% in fiscal years 2026 and 2027; etc. The data can then guide future actions.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0039.

¹ <https://marylandmatters.org/2024/12/02/maryland-needs-another-30000-behavioral-health-workers-to-meet-growing-demand/#:~:text=That%20would%20be%20a%20new,it%20in%20more%20expensive%20settings.%E2%80%9D>

² Google AI Search "is there a mental health crisis in Maryland"