



March 10, 2026

Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 702 — Behavioral Health Administration – Behavioral Health Program Relocation – Regulations

Position: SUPPORT

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Recovery Housing & Treatment Center Coalition of Maryland (RHTC), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 702, which requires the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to establish an expedited regulatory process for licensed behavioral health programs seeking to relocate to a new site.

RHTC represents behavioral health and recovery service providers across Maryland that deliver critical treatment and recovery supports for individuals with substance use and co-occurring disorders. Our members play a vital role in maintaining access to care, housing stability, and continuity of treatment for individuals working toward recovery.

Senate Bill 702 addresses a longstanding operational challenge within Maryland's behavioral health licensing framework. Under current processes, providers relocating an existing program are often required to undergo procedures similar to those for establishing a new program, even when the services, staffing, ownership, and program model remain unchanged. These requirements can create significant administrative burdens, delays in service delivery, and financial risk for providers, ultimately affecting access to care for Maryland residents.

The bill's requirement that BHA establish a separate and expedited relocation approval process represents an important and practical improvement. Provisions allowing the reuse of previously submitted documentation, consideration of a provider's compliance history, and temporary approval to operate at a new location once life-safety requirements are met are particularly valuable. These measures recognize that established providers with strong compliance records should be able to relocate without unnecessary barriers while maintaining appropriate oversight and safety standards.



For recovery housing and treatment providers, relocation may occur for many legitimate reasons, including lease changes, zoning requirements, facility safety concerns, or program expansion to meet community needs. Delays in licensure approval during relocation can disrupt services, create instability for individuals receiving treatment, and place providers at financial risk.

Streamlining this process helps preserve continuity of care and supports system capacity at a time when behavioral health services are critically needed across the State. RHTC also appreciates the bill's direction to the Behavioral Health Administration to provide clarity regarding timelines, requirements, and standards for relocation approvals. Predictable and transparent processes benefit both providers and regulators by reducing uncertainty and promoting compliance.

As the bill moves forward, RHTC encourages consideration of implementation details to ensure the intended benefits are realized. Clear timelines for review and approval, explicit criteria for temporary operating authority, and recognition of providers in good standing will be important components of effective regulations.

Overall, Senate Bill 702 represents a commonsense approach to improving administrative efficiency while maintaining regulatory oversight. Facilitating timely program relocation helps ensure Maryland residents continue to have access to essential behavioral health and recovery services without interruption.

For these reasons, the Recovery Housing & Treatment Center Coalition of Maryland respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 702. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information call or email:

Therese M. Hessler, Ashlar Government Relations | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com