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Testimony on Senate Bill 39:

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

Senate Finance Committee

March 3, 2026

**POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

My name is Kara K. Morris, and I am the Executive Director at Crossroads Community, Inc and Corsica River Mental Health Services, Inc., a community-based behavioral health provider serving adults and youth in the Mid-Shore region of the Eastern Shore.

SB39 intends to become a cross-file of HB772, and amendments have been prepared to align the two pieces of legislation. Crossroads Community, Inc and Corsica River Mental Health Services, Inc., strongly supports the amended version of SB39 because it strengthens Maryland's rate study process by ensuring independence, transparency, and meaningful provider participation. It improves the process. It does not mandate automatic rate increases. It ensures that rate-setting is clear, data-informed, and grounded in operational reality.

At Crossroads Community, Inc and Corsica River Mental Health Services, Inc., we serve approximately 1200 individuals each year through, Outpatient Mental Health Clinic, Outpatient Substance Use Treatment, Assertive Community Treatment Team, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program, Residential Rehabilitation Program, Health Homes Program, and Respite Services. We are experiencing real operational strain.

**Specifically, these are just a few of the impacts we have experienced:**

**Workforce Vacancies and Recruitment Challenges**

Low reimbursement rates have severely limited our ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. We are unable to compete with for-profit employers, not just those in our fields but even unrelated fields including fast food and grocery stores, that can offer higher starting wages than we are able to provide for direct care roles. As a result, we have not operated at full Residential staffing capacity in over five years.

We are especially impacted in therapist positions, where government agencies, hospitals, and private mental health practices offer significantly higher salaries.

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### **Wait Times for Outpatient Services**

While referral rates for outpatient services are higher than ever, our clinical capacity has not kept pace due to workforce shortages driven by inadequate rates. Currently, individuals must wait 45–60 days from referral before they can be scheduled for an intake appointment. These delays create barriers to timely access to care and increase the risk that individuals' symptoms will worsen before services can begin.

Current reimbursement does not reflect the full cost of delivering care. We have absorbed increased costs related to supervision, compliance, documentation, and reporting. These requirements are necessary, but they depend on staffing and infrastructure that are not accounted for in the current rates.

Providers delivering care every day should have a formal role in informing how rates are studied and developed. The amended version of SB39 ensures that providers have a seat at the table so that the methodology reflects the actual cost of delivering services in Maryland communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on the amended version of SB39.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kara K. Morris".

Kara K. Morris, MS, CPRP, CFRP, RPS  
Executive Director

Crossroads Community, Inc. & Corsica River Mental Health Services, Inc.

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