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Acadia Healthcare

Connie.Dausch@ctcprograms.com

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Johns Hopkins/Bayview

DMadden4@jhmi.edu

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Northern Parkway Treatment

Services, BH Health Services

BabakImanoel@gmail.com

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Johns Hopkins Hospital

Board of Directors - AATOD

KStolle@jhmi.edu

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TPowell@addictionmedical.net

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IBR/REACH

VWalters@IBRInc.org

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MedMark Treatment Centers

HAshkin@MedMark.com



Mailing Address

c/o Dr. Babak Imanoel

3126 Enclave Court

Pikesville, MD 21208



[www.matod.org](http://www.matod.org)

Senate Health Committee

March 4, 2026

## Senate Bill 910 – Health Insurance – Graduate-Level Clinical Interns – Required Reimbursement **FAVORABLE**

The state is currently experiencing a significant behavioral health workforce shortage. In 2024, the Maryland Health Care Commission stated that an additional 30,000 behavioral health workers will be needed by 2028 to meet the existing demand. This shortage includes graduate-level licensed providers such as counselors, clinical social workers, and psychologists, professions that are essential for substance use disorder (SUD) outpatient programs.

SUD outpatient programs (including Opioid Treatment Programs, or OTPs) are facing critical clinician shortages across the state. This impacts access to care, leading to longer waitlists, delayed treatment, and increased strain on existing staff. For individuals seeking care for SUDs, delays in treatment can be serious and life-threatening.

Graduate-level interns are a solution to improving access to care, particularly for underserved and high-need populations. When appropriately supervised by licensed clinicians, interns provide high-quality services while gaining the experience necessary to become fully licensed providers. Internships in this field often evolve into full time employment once the intern graduates and attains their license.

By enabling SUD outpatient programs to receive reimbursement for services delivered by supervised graduate interns, SB910 would help address Maryland's behavioral health workforce shortage. Reimbursement allows programs to expand their capacity to train interns, reduce the financial burden associated with supervision, and invest in developing the next generation of licensed professionals. This policy supports both immediate access to care and long-term workforce sustainability.

Additionally, SB910 would assist to reduce provider shortage and increase access to care while Maryland's Board of Professional Counselors (BoPC) is experiencing extended delays in processing and approving counselor and trainee applications. An application for an Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) can take at least three months to process and approve, and often longer; these timelines restrict the ability for OTPs to onboard graduate interns and other potential employees who would be otherwise qualified to provide billable services under clinical supervision.

Maryland already recognizes this model in other settings. Outpatient Mental Health Clinics (OMHCs) are currently permitted to bill for services provided by supervised interns. SB910 extends this existing framework to SUD outpatient programs.

For these reasons, MATOD respectfully urges favorable consideration of SB 910.

*MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.*

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