



**Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2026**

**Senate Bill 205 - Health Insurance - Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders -
Codification of Federal Requirements**

Favorable

More than 15 years ago, Congress passed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. Despite the federal law, Marylanders continue to struggle to get their mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) issues sufficiently addressed with the health insurance they pay for.

Over the years, the Maryland General Assembly has passed bills to try to ensure compliance by carriers and proper oversight by the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA). We are grateful for the support this committee and the full legislature have shown in support of these and other measures. Additionally, a 2024 federal parity rule was adopted at the federal level to improve parity compliance by clarifying obligations around meaningful benefits, data-driven oversight, and nondiscriminatory standards.

Now, these federal rules that help people access care are under threat. In response, the MIA is taking the proactive step of codifying important pieces of federal regulations that could be repealed. This legislation proposes to put into Maryland components of existing federal regulations, including:

- Requiring health plans to collect, evaluate, and explain data to assess the impact on access to MH/SUD care;
- Prohibiting the use of discriminatory information, evidence, sources, and standards in the design and application of treatment limitations;
- Requiring coverage of core MH/SUD treatments in every classification in which meaningful benefits are covered for medical and surgical conditions; and

The legislation also clarifies the MIA's authority to enforce parity protections based on state regulations, in addition to the federal law.

We urge this committee to give a favorable report to Senate Bill 205.