

March 3, 2026

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and distinguished members of the Finance Committee,

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 60,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

It is our understanding that SB39 intends to become a cross-file of HB772, and amendments have been prepared to align the two pieces of legislation.

Our State's behavioral health system is at a critical juncture. For too long, reimbursement rates for community providers have lacked the transparency and data-driven foundations necessary to sustain high-quality care. This bill addresses that gap by tasking a diverse workgroup of legislators, providers, and experts to develop transparent, cost-based reimbursement methodologies for both Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) and outpatient mental health centers.

This workgroup will analyze real-world cost drivers—such as staffing mix, workforce models, and regulatory compliance requirements—ensuring Maryland's behavioral health infrastructure can move toward a sustainable, phased implementation of modernized rate-setting.

This legislation does not mandate an immediate appropriation; rather, it provides analytical framework needed to ensure that our state's mental health and substance use services are fiscally sound and capable of meeting the rising needs of our residents. We believe that establishing this workgroup is a vital step toward a more equitable and effective behavioral health system. We urge a favorable report on SB 39.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

Stephanie Slowly-Little
Executive Director
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

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