



Maryland Community Health System

Bill Number: Senate Bill 496 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity

Committee: Senate Finance

Hearing Date: February 17, 2026

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports Senate Bill 496 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity. The bill allow the Medicaid to optionally cover comprehensive obesity treatment, including behavioral therapy, FDA-approved medications, and bariatric surgery, beginning January 1, 2027. If the coverage is adopted, the Department of Health must notify Medicaid beneficiaries and report on implementation.

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) is a network of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that serve underserved communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas across Maryland. FQHCs support the bill because it expands Medicaid coverage for evidence-based obesity treatments, allowing FQHCs to better address a major chronic condition affecting their medically underserved patients. Coverage for behavioral therapy, medications, and surgery supports whole-person, preventive care, improves health outcomes, and helps reduce long-term costs associated with obesity-related conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can answer any questions, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.