

February 27, 2026

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair

Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair

Finance Committee

3 East Miller Senate office Building

Annapolis MD 21401

**Bill: Senate Bill 568 – Health Occupations – Licensed Psychologists – Prescriptive Authority**

**Position: Strong Support**

I am Neal Morris, a practicing Licensed Psychologist providing services since 1984 to Marylanders; specializing in Sleep Psychology services. I completed the specialized Post-Doctoral training in Clinical Psychopharmacology over 20 years ago. I am a Past President of the Maryland Psychological Association. I am writing to urge you to support SB 568.

I believe there are three Key-points in regard to this proposed legislation: ACCESS to care will be improved, the QUALITY of comprehensive mental healthcare will continue to be high by ensuring that only psychologists with additional specialized training will be authorized to prescribe psychotropic medications and finally that comprehensive mental healthcare will become more affordable by reducing out-of-pocket COST.

ACCESS – by enacting this Bill there will be more expert providers able to prescribe medications if warranted. There are already dozens of psychologists with this specialized additional training in Maryland. There are simply too few prescribers given the vast numbers of those individuals seeking services.

QUALITY of care will be enhanced by granting authority to appropriately trained psychologists who are extremely well trained in providing psychological treatments. When individuals who need treatment can not get appointments or

can not afford the high out-of-pocket fees, they either go to their PCPs who do their best, but because of limited training in treating mental and behavioral problems do beginning services and are able do only very limited follow through due to all the routine family practice demands they manage daily.

COST is a huge concern. Mental health physician prescribers who accept any insurance seem to be quite rare. Many of the psychologists in states where prescribing is presently authorized do accept insurance, both commercial and public (Medicare/Medicaid). And, there is solid evidence that the mental health crisis appears to have receded such as a lowering of the suicide rates of the underserved in these states.

I believe this Bill is a potential clear WIN for Marylanders!

Respectfully,

Neal R. Morris, EdD, MSCP, DBSM, ABPP-CL

Maryland Licensed Psychologist

Board Certified in Clinical Psychology and Behavioral Sleep Medicine