



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Health Occupations - Licensed Psychologists - Prescriptive Authority

Bill Number(s): HB1021/SB0568

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: February 27, 2026

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

House Health Committee

The Hon. Heather Bagnall, Chair
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Senate Finance Committee

The Hon. Heather Bagnall, Chair
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully submits this testimony in support of HB1021/SB0568 to authorize prescriptive authority for licensed psychologists who meet rigorous education, training, and certification requirements.

The Commission was established by the Maryland General Assembly to assess the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ communities, collect data, and inform state policy. Our work consistently finds that access to timely, culturally competent mental health care remains a significant challenge for LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, particularly for transgender individuals, LGBTQIA+ youth, and those living in rural or underserved areas.

Preliminary findings from the Commission's [2026 Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment](#) highlight the scope of these challenges. Nearly half of respondents (47%) reported experiencing obstacles or delays in receiving health care in Maryland, with barriers most pronounced in mental health and specialty services. More than one-third reported avoiding medical care due to anticipated discrimination.

The assessment also reflects substantial mental health need. Over 22% of respondents reported seriously considering suicide in the past 12 months, and more than 61% reported lifetime suicidal ideation.

At the same time, many LGBTQIA+ Marylanders rely on psychologists as their primary and most trusted behavioral health providers. However, shortages of psychiatric prescribers and fragmented care models can delay treatment, disrupt continuity of care, and create additional barriers for individuals already navigating stigma, transportation challenges, or limited provider networks.

Allowing licensed psychologists who complete advanced postdoctoral training in clinical pharmacology and supervised prescribing experience to provide medication management would expand the behavioral health workforce and support more integrated models of care. For patients already receiving therapy, the ability to obtain coordinated treatment from a qualified provider can reduce delays, improve treatment adherence, and strengthen engagement in care.

Expanding access to integrated mental health services is particularly important for LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, whose experiences of discrimination, social isolation, and minority stress are associated with higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. Increasing the number of qualified professionals able to meet these needs supports both health equity and overall system capacity.

The Commission's Community Needs Assessment makes clear that improving access to affirming mental health care is a statewide priority that will require workforce development, expanded provider capacity, and more coordinated systems of care.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully urges a favorable report on HB1021/SB0568.

Reference:

Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. (2026). *Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment: Preliminary Findings Report* (in partnership with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore).

<https://goci.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/02/2026-MDLGBTQIA-Community-Needs-Assessment-Preliminary-Findings-Report.pdf>