



Montgomery County Counseling Center

Dear Del. Bagnall, Del. Cullison and members of the Health Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1021.

My name is Laura Goldstein, LCMFT. I have been a licensed marriage and family therapist since 2012 and a small business owner in Montgomery County, Maryland since 2017. Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand the hardships families face when attempting to access adequate mental health treatment for their children. In addition to longstanding systemic barriers (i.e. cost, insurance limitations, and workforce shortage) families must also navigate the fragmented nature of our behavioral health system.

These silos between service providers create unnecessary financial and logistical burdens, including multiple appointments at different locations, conflicting schedules, and duplicated evaluations. Most significantly, they create clinical barriers to truly collaborative care. While providers strive to coordinate treatment, the reality is that professionals are not always available to consult or collaborate at the frequency necessary to deliver comprehensive, timely care.

Establishing a pathway for appropriately trained and clinically qualified psychologists to obtain prescriptive authority in Maryland would help streamline care for many families. Allowing a single, well-trained provider who is already deeply familiar with a client's symptoms, history, and treatment plan to manage both psychotherapy and indicated medication needs would reduce delays, lower costs, and ease scheduling burdens.

Most importantly, timely access to appropriate medication management, when clinically indicated, can significantly reduce suffering and improve overall outcomes. Empowering qualified providers to respond efficiently to their clients' needs strengthens not only individual and family well-being, but also the health and safety of our communities as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration of HB1021 and for your continued commitment to strengthening Maryland's behavioral health workforce. I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Laura Goldstein, LCMFT
Owner and Executive Director
Montgomery County Counseling Center

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