

February 18, 2026

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and distinguished members of the Health 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.

NAMI Maryland knows that timely access to mental health treatment is of the utmost importance—however, Marylanders often face barriers to accessing timely care due to a shortage of mental health professionals. There are not enough professionals to meet the increasing demand. This bill provides a vital, common-sense solution to expand the workforce.

HB769 address the workforce shortage by mandating the issuance of conditional licenses to qualified initial applicants. This will allow for qualified individuals to begin work in the field immediately, reducing the administrative delay that keeps many qualified professionals unable to see patients. Additionally, the bill establishes an alternative pathway to full licensure through hands-on experience.

NAMI Maryland believes that the mental health and substance use workforce must be sufficient in supply, diversity and training to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of people seeking mental health care. NAMI Maryland supports public policies and laws that expand the workforce in a way that allows more individuals to be seen in a timely manner while ensuring the high standards of mental health professionals are kept.

Without enough providers, people with mental health conditions face barriers in accessing care—leaving many people without options for mental health in their community. This bill is one key piece of addressing provider shortages across our State.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

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

Contact: Morgan Mills-DiEnno
Compass Government Relations
Mmills@compassadvocacy.com