

# MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 20, 2026

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The Honorable Heather Bagnall  
Health Committee  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Oppose: HB 1293: Behavioral Health Programs - Residents at Inpatient Facilities - Sex Offender Registry Compliance

Dear Chairwoman Bagnall & Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS/WPS represent over 1200 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS Oppose: HB 1293: Behavioral Health Programs - Residents at Inpatient Facilities - Sex Offender Registry Compliance. This bill creates a mandate for inpatient programs and treatment facilities to cooperate with law enforcement with regard to sex offender registration. While MPS/WPS supports the intent of this bill, specifically public safety, there are aspects which conflict with existing state law and could discourage individuals from seeking the treatment they need to remain safe. Treatment programs and their patients would be required to be knowledgeable of the crimes which require patients to register as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 sex offenders as well as the exceptions to this law. A civil fine or licensure action could be levied simply for being unaware that a patient was a Tier 1 offender for owning "misleading domain names on the Internet under 18 U.S.C. § 2252B" per Maryland Criminal Procedure 11-701(o)(4)(i).

If the patient is not registered, the program must tell them they must register, but are not required to help them do this. The program must also coordinate this effort with law enforcement. This bill turns hospitals into an arm of law enforcement and imposes a duty that is not required of other patients on parole or probation. The duty of monitoring sex offender registration and compliance should remain with those agencies.

MPS/WPS, therefore, ask this honorable committee for an unfavorable report on HB 995. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Lisa Harris Jones at [lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society & Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee