

February 24, 2026

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

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on HB658.

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. We are 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.

HB658 establishes the Community Forensic Aftercare Program within the Maryland Department of Health. This program is designed to provide structured monitoring for "committed persons"—those found not criminally responsible—on conditional release, as well as individuals found incompetent to stand trial but not a danger to themselves or others. By creating a dedicated program to monitor compliance with court-ordered conditions, Maryland can better ensure the safety of both the individual and the community while promoting successful long-term outcomes.

A key strength of this bill is its emphasis on clinical expertise. The program will employ Program Monitors who are Licensed Certified Social Workers-Clinical (LCSW-C).

These monitors are tasked with:

- Collecting and reviewing information regarding compliance with conditional release.
- Making behavioral health recommendations to the individual's providers and the court.
- Holding mandatory meetings every 90 days with the committed person and their mental health team to ensure a cohesive approach to care.

Furthermore, the bill establishes a Community Monitoring Board composed of licensed health care providers. This board will make vital recommendations regarding the modification, extension, or early termination of conditional release, ensuring that these life-altering decisions are grounded in clinical judgment.

NAMI Maryland applauds the bill's provisions that protect the rights and dignity of committed persons. Individuals have the right to appoint an advocate to attend program meetings. For matters before the Community Monitoring Board, individuals can select an authorized agent to represent their interests and present arguments. The Monitoring Board must maintain written records of its findings and reasons for its decisions, which

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

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

are then included in the individual's medical record. And finally, to ensure fair legal representation, the bill mandates the timely disclosure of records to counsel, including a 24-hour turnaround for written requests from the Office of the Public Defender in certain circumstances.

HB658 creates a more transparent, clinically-driven, and supportive framework for individuals transitioning from inpatient forensic settings back into the community. By balancing public safety with robust mental health support and legal protections, this bill will improve lives and strengthen our behavioral health system.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.