

March 18 2026

Re: Opposition to HB 2021

Dear Chair Bagnell and Members of the Health Committee

I am a psychiatrist practicing in Maryland since 1996 and I am your constituent.

I must express my grave concern over HB2021 which would allow psychologists to prescribe psychiatric medication.

The bill only requires 400 hours of clinical training in order to prescribe potentially dangerous medications to Marylanders.

Physicians undergo approximately 5,000 to 6,000 hours of clinical, hands-on patient care training during their four years of medical school (years 3 and 4). . Psychiatry residents in a 4-year residency program typically complete between 10,000 and 13,000 hours of total clinical and educational work, based on an average of 50-60 hours per week over 48-50 working weeks per year. So psychiatrists like me have had between 15,000 to 20,000 hours of clinical training before being allowed to practice independently. I will tell you that even with this level of training, and having practiced for nearly 40 years, practicing psychopharmacotherapy is challenging and difficult.

I was able to watch the hearing you had on this bill. One of the delegates said that there are no psychiatrists on the Eastern Shore who participate in insurance panels. I believe this is factually incorrect. I know several colleagues who practice there who do accept insurance. In addition, with the expansion of telehealth, Eastern Shore and other rural residents have access to providers all over the state. My office is in Arnold, about 7 miles from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. I participate in many insurance plans and see many Eastern Shore residents in person or via telehealth.

During my career, medication treatment of psychiatric illness has expanded greatly in its complexity and scope. I have had to continually educate myself in order to stay current in my field. But all of my knowledge rests firmly on my education as a physician and psychiatrist that I learned during 8 years of medical school and psychiatry residency. The answer to expanding access to care is not allowing psychologists with 400 hours of training to do the same job as psychiatrists with 17,000 hours.

Sincerely,

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