



Maryland Defenders Union
Local 423, AFSCME Council 3
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Marci Tarrant Johnson, President
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Najah Brown, Non-Attorney Board Member
Andrew Northrup, Trustee

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB 412 & HB 658 - Maryland Department of Health – Community Forensic

Aftercare Program – Established

FROM: Maryland Defenders Union, AFSCME Local #423

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

DATE: March 5, 2026

The Maryland Defenders Union respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on SB 412/HB 658. We support the sponsor's amendments.

Our members within the Mental Health Division of the Office of the Public Defender represent clients who are monitored by the Community Forensic Aftercare Program. These clients typically include individuals who committed a crime, were deemed Not Criminally Responsible due to their mental health status, and have spent years committed to a state hospital for treatment and recovery. Once it is determined that they are not a danger to themselves or others, they are released to live in the community under strict conditions, including monitoring by CFAP.

Currently, CFAP monitors can recommend, but not determine, changes in treatment. This is because CFAP monitors lack a clinical, treatment-based relationship with our clients. Rather, the Maryland Department of Health employs CFAP monitors to review our clients' compliance with the conditions of their release. Our clients' community-based providers, who have active clinical relationships with them, make decisions about our clients' treatment. We support the language in this bill that ensures CFAP monitors continue to make recommendations, but not treatment decisions.

The bill will create minimum standards and promote transparency through notice requirements and by including client-authorized advocates in conversations related to treatment and monitoring. We support the sponsor's amendments, which have been proposed to reach as much consensus as possible between the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, and the Maryland State's Attorney's Association. We ask that you issue a favorable report.

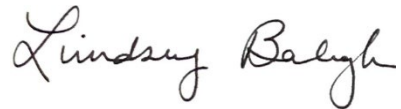
Respectfully submitted,

Marci Tarrant Johnson
President
Maryland Defenders Union
AFSCME Local 423

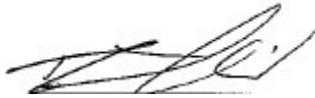
Mental Health Division Members



Julianna Felkoski, Assistant Public Defender



Lindsey Balogh, Advanced Social Worker



Daniel Weir, Assistant Public Defender



Sarah Little, Assistant Public Defender



Niel Rosen, Assistant Public Defender