

February 12, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and distinguished members of the Ways and Means 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.

HB 468 establishes the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth in order to provide better and more easily accessible mental health services for children within the state of Maryland. This fund would be financed through a tax that would be put into place on certain revenues from social media services.

One of our goals here at NAMI Maryland is to ensure that people struggling with mental illness get the help they need as early as possible, and for many individuals that means as children. In fact, most mental health issues begin in childhood and progress as the individual gets older. Early intervention greatly increases the chances that these individuals can be properly cared for and not progress into much more serious symptoms. We know that there is a detrimental effect of social media on individual's mental health. HB468 would address this issue by providing a steady stream of funding and resources in order to assure children in need get the mental health care that they both need and deserve.

We align ourselves with the concept of this bill, but we strongly request that instead of creating an entirely new fund for children and youth the money should go to the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports instead. The Consortium already exists and provides the same services and more that the proposed fund would serve to do. The Consortium provides both school and community mental health services to children, serving nearly 100,000 students just with over 90% reporting improved outcomes. In the FY27 budget, the Consortium is facing a \$20 million dollar budget, which this proposed funding in HB468 could make up for-- allowing for the children across the state to continue with the mental health services they are already receiving without having to create an entirely new fund. With all of this considered, we at NAMI strongly urge a favorable report with this specified amendment on HB 468.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

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