



February 6, 2026

**House Ways and Means Committee  
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

*HB 468 Health and Taxation - Digital Social Media Services and the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth.*

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

**Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports and offers an amendment on HB 468 – Health and Taxation - Digital Social Media Services and the Mental Health Care Fund for Children and Youth.** This bill would establish a mental health care fund to improve access to mental health services for youth in the state. It would raise revenue for this fund by taxing social media companies that operate in Maryland.

HB 468 would help fund youth mental health programs at a time of significant budgetary challenges. The State is currently facing a \$1.5 billion budget gap that’s driven in part by federal layoffs and increasing spending on the Blueprint for Education program.<sup>1</sup> These pressures are already manifesting themselves through reductions in youth mental health funding. The Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports was a critical component of the Blueprint to support behavioral health programming in schools, but it has faced budget cuts in each of the last two years. It served over 136,000 students in 2025 – almost twice the population of the City of Frederick – and its funding helps youth access school therapists, mental health crisis support, substance use prevention programs, and more.<sup>2</sup> Rather than making cuts that compromise Maryland’s commitment to the wellbeing of its youth, the State could maintain funding for the Blueprint and the Consortium through taxing social media companies.

BHSB proposes an amendment to the bill that would direct any funds collected from the tax to the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports, instead of creating an entirely new fund and administrative structure to manage the fund. This would address the consistent pressure that the Consortium has faced and ensure its effective, statewide services can continue.

The tax proposed in HB 468 is a reasonable approach to funding youth mental health. Almost all United States teens - 95% - are on social media, and social media companies collectively made \$11 billion in 2022 through targeting advertisements towards minors.<sup>3,4</sup> Research finds that frequent social media puts youth at risk for low self-esteem, depression, and poor sleep.<sup>5</sup> Despite that, social media companies design their platforms to be addictive and make record

profits while harming Maryland's youth.<sup>6</sup> These companies should be held accountable and contribute to support the behavioral health of the State's youth.

SB327 helps fund youth mental health services while holding social media companies accountable. For these reasons, **BHSB urges the House Ways and Means Committee to support HB 468.**

***For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142***

### **Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>*Maryland Matters*, Moore's fourth budget uses cuts, fund shifts to close \$1.5 billion budget gap. Available at: <https://marylandmatters.org/2026/01/21/moores-fourth-budget-uses-cuts-fund-shifts-to-close-1-5-billion-budget-gap/>

<sup>2</sup>*Maryland Department of Health*, Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports. Available at: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Pages/Maryland-Consortium-on-Consolidated-Community-Supports.aspx>

<sup>3</sup>*Maryland Department of Health*, Social Media and Youth Mental Health. Available at: <https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/Social-Media-and-Youth-Mental-Health.aspx>

<sup>4</sup>*Associated Press*, Social media companies made \$11 billion in US ad revenue from minors, Harvard study finds, Associated Press. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/tiktok-meta-instagram-revenue-teens-harvard-cc9bf875d6f7259ba2aee8805ccdaf3d>

<sup>5</sup>*NIH National Library of Medicine*, *Understanding Social Media Addiction: A Deep Dive*. Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11594359/>

<sup>6</sup>2023, *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2023. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED666656.pdf>