

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 13, 2026

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The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support With Amendment: House Bill 740: Public Schools - School-Based Mental Health Services - Full-Time Therapist

Dear Chairwoman Wilkins & Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS/WPS represent over 1200 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS supports with amendment House Bill 740: Public Schools - School-Based Mental Health Services - Full-Time Therapist. Please see the suggested revisions on the following pages. With these suggested amendments, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB740.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society & Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee

HOUSE BILL 740

F1 6lr2858

By: **Delegates Stinnett, Addison, Rosenberg, Simmons, and Terrasa** Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2026
Assigned to: Ways and Means and Health

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 Public Schools – School–Based Mental Health Services – Full–Time Therapist

3 FOR the purpose of requiring each public school to employ a full–time therapist that 4
provides school–based mental health services to students during the instructional

5 day; requiring the full–time therapist to be licensed and certified by the State Board of

6 ~~Psychologists, Professional Board of Social Work Examiners, or Board of Professional~~
Counselors, and Therapists; and generally relating to mental health

7 services in public schools.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Education

10 Section 7–401

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 Article – Education

16 7–401.

17 (a) With the assistance of the county health department, each county board shall

18 provide:

19 (1) Adequate school health services;

20 (2) Instruction in health education, including the importance of physical

21 activity in maintaining good health; and

22 (3) A healthful school environment.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

2 HOUSE BILL 740

1 (b) The Department and the Maryland Department of Health jointly shall:

2 (1) Develop public standards and guidelines for school health programs;

3 and

4 (2) Offer assistance to the county boards and county health departments

5 in their implementation.

6 (c) (1) (i) Each county board shall designate a school health services

7 program coordinator.

8 (ii) A county board may authorize the county health department to

9 designate the school health services program coordinator.

10 (2) The school health services program coordinator shall:

11 (i) Implement State and local health policies in the public schools;

12 (ii) Ensure that public schools adhere to local health services

13 guidelines; and

14 (iii) Communicate State and local health policies to the parents and

15 guardians of public school students.

16 (3) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the

17 county board shall grant the school health services program coordinator the authority to

18 carry out the provisions of this subsection.

19 (ii) The county board shall consult with a county superintendent

20 before any change in the hiring or termination of personnel in connection with a school
21 health services program.

22 (4) The Department shall conduct at least two meetings annually with all
23 school health services program coordinators in the State.

24 **(D) (1) EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL SHALL EMPLOY A FULL-TIME THERAPIST**
25 **THAT PROVIDES SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO STUDENTS DURING**
26 **THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY AND COORDINATES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE AND**
RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES.
27 **(2) THE THERAPIST EMPLOYED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**
28 **SUBSECTION SHALL BE LICENSED AND CERTIFIED BY THE STATE BOARD OF**
29 **PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS, STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK**
EXAMINERS, OR STATE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY.

30 **[(d)] (E)** On or before December 1, 2015, and every 5 years thereafter, the 31 Department
shall report to the Governor and, subject to § 2-1257 of the State Government

HOUSE BILL 740 3

1 Article, to the General Assembly a summary of the information reported to the State 2
Superintendent during the COMAR certification process.

3 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That this Act shall take effect July 4 1,
2026.