



## **SB 604 – Public and Nonpublic Schools – Medical Cannabis – Policy for Administration During School Hours and Events**

**Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs**

**Date: February 18, 2020**

**POSITION : Favorable**

**The Maryland Coalition of Families:** Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for someone with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience as parents, caregivers and other loved ones, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to parents and caregivers of young people with mental health issues and to any loved one who cares for someone with a substance use or gambling issue.

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MCF strongly supports SB 604.

Currently, families with a child that has been prescribed medical cannabis are in an impossible position. They must travel to school during the day, take their child off of school grounds, administer the medical cannabis, and take their child back to school. For families that work, this produces a tremendous hardship, if it is even doable.

Children are prescribed medical cannabis for good reason. Frequently multiple other medications have failed, and doctors prescribe medical cannabis as a drug of last resort. The doctors are aware of the potential side effects, and so are the families. The side effects are often no worse than the side effects of other medications, which are routinely given in schools.

Something must be done to address this problem. SB 604, by both allowing a caregiver to designate other adults to administer medical cannabis, and by requiring the Maryland State Department of Education to establish guidelines and provide training around the administration of medical cannabis, will go a long way to helping families that are currently struggling under the existing regulations.

The fiscal note for SB 604 makes two important points:

*“According to the commission, as of July 2019, nine states authorize medical cannabis to be administered on school property,”*

and,

*“Across the country, there is broad concern that allowing students to consume medical cannabis on school grounds and/or the administration of medical cannabis by school staff could jeopardize federal funding for schools. However, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) was unable to find any specific examples where this occurred.”*

For these reasons, there is little rationale that the existing regulations cannot be changed; they should be changed.

We urge a favorable report on SB 604.

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