



February 6, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass  
House Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – HB 447: Health Insurance - Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders - Coverage

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS supports House Bill 447 (HB 447). Extensive research exists that documents the emergence of tics and obsessive-compulsive symptoms in some children who have been exposed to streptococcal infections. Referred to as PANDAS, Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal infection, the first-line treatment is with antibiotics. However, for subset of children who develop severe symptoms from the infection, intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) has shown to be an effective treatment. MPS therefore supports insurance coverage of pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders in order to ensure that children in need will have access to this treatment.

For these reasons, MPS respectfully asks the committee to move favorably on HB 447. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett, Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society.