



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc  
2101 East Jefferson Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

January 20, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Senate Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB 161 – Support**

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support SB 161 – “Task Force to Study Access to Mental Health Care in Higher Education.”

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for approximately 775,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to over 450,000 members.

Kaiser Permanente is strongly committed to providing high quality behavioral health care for our members and recognizes that there are unique mental health concerns for college students. Suicide is a leading cause of death among college-aged students in the United States. It is estimated that a campus of 10,000 students will experience a student suicide every 2-3 years. As the pandemic has required a more insular lifestyle for college students, they are at greater risk of mental health decline as they are now required to isolate and refrain from social activities. Depression has been consistently identified as a major precursor to suicide in all segments of the population. Many depressed individuals are never diagnosed or adequately treated which creates a greater mandate to ensure we create methods to mitigate the incidence of mental illness.

Kaiser Permanente supports this legislation to create a Task Force focused on promoting mental health and wellness at the university level. If enacted, we will seek a seat on this Task Force.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact Allison Taylor at [Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org](mailto:Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org) or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.

Kaiser Permanente  
Comments on SB 161  
January 20, 2021

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne D. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

Wayne D. Wilson  
Vice President, Government Programs and External Relations  
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.