



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

Testimony submitted to Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 30, 2021

**House Bill 461 – Public Schools - Student Attendance - Excused Absences for
Mental Health Needs**

Support with Amendments

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus, which represents a statewide network of Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) throughout the State of Maryland, supports House Bill 461, Public Schools - Student Attendance - Excused Absences for Mental Health Needs, with amendments being offered by Senator Lam. YSBs provide prevention, intervention and treatment services to at-risk youth and work with many youth experiencing mental health related issues. This bill will provide a needed resource to students when they are experiencing a mental health issue or crisis.

MAYSB supports young people being able to take a "sick day" for any health reason, including behavioral health. We are concerned, however, with the amendments added to the bill in the House because they create a complicated system, create a new and questionable definition of a mental health professional, and could unintentionally lead to the stigmatization around mental health.

We have been working with Senator Lam on amendments, and we believe, those he has offered to this bill make it a meaningful bill that strikes a balance between making resources available to families without unnecessarily stigmatizing children.

We respectfully ask you to support this bill with amendments.

Respectfully Submitted:

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