



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

**April 6, 2021**

**House Bill 377  
Commission on Student Behavioral Health and  
Mental Health Treatment**

NCADD-Maryland strongly supports the passage of House Bill 377, a bill to establish the Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment.

We believe the evidence is clear that young people throughout the state are suffering, and there is a great need to enhance our collective ability to help them. Creating a Commission that examines the level of need, the gaps in services, the best practices, and the latest research will ensure we are using the most effective means to address the mental health and substance use problems young people are dealing with.

Of specific concern to NCADD-Maryland is the historical perspective that substance use in a school setting is dealt with as a disciplinary issue. Many times, a young person's use of substances is related to other issues of concerns, perhaps a mental health problem or a reaction to trauma. We support this Commission in recommending effective interventions that provide support to students, and not just a suspension. We also support the Commission looking at effective practices in working with community-based services that can engage with a young person and their family on an ongoing basis.

We urge a favorable report on HB 377.

*The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.*