

OPPOSE SB 41 - Mental and Emotional Disorders – Consent (Mental Health Access Initiative)

I am writing to OPPOSE SB 41 - Mental and Emotional Disorders – Consent (Mental Health Access Initiative).

I have concerns any time a parent or guardian is removed from the care of a minor child. Despite the bill claiming that the minor needs to have been deemed as "mature and capable of giving informed consent," it does not spell out what standardized assessment will be used to make that determination. This leaves the door wide open for providers to make assumptions based on one short visit with the minor child which may not be whole and accurate. The parent/guardian of any minor child should always be involved with their care. We should be working to strengthen parent-teen relationships, not weaken them. If these minors are truly hurting, they need their parents to help guide and nurture them, not for those people to be seen as an enemy preventing them from getting the care they need.

I'd also like to know who is paying for these treatments. Are providers expected to see these children free of charge? This bill states, "Unless the parent, guardian, or custodian of a minor consents to consultation, diagnosis, or treatment of the minor, the parent, guardian, or custodian is not liable for any costs of the consultation, diagnosis, or treatment of the minor under this section." If the parent isn't paying for it, and insurance clearly isn't covering it (what minor carries an insurance card?), where is the money for the treatment coming from?

Another concern I have is that this bill is opening the door for abuse by providers. If providers aren't being paid monetarily, I'm concerned that some may seek other forms of treatment. [SC doctor sexually abused child patient: Columbia police | The State](#) This sort of conduct is why parents NEED to be involved with all aspects of a child's care. In the article above, it was the family of the child who stepped in and reported the abuse he was receiving from his doctor. A quick Google search shows that doctors abusing minor patients is an all too common occurrence. Parents need to be present to protect their child. [Doctors & Sex Abuse: How doctors who abuse patients keep practicing, 50-state investigation finds \(ajc.com\)](#) This page mentions several incidents.

Please oppose this bill and protect our children by keeping parents involved in their care.

Jessica Helms
623 Elfin Ave.
Capitol Heights, MD
(585) 610-6119