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POSITION STATEMENT

Senate Bill 0056 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse
Practitioner Telemedicine Reimbursement – Sunset Termination
Before Finance Committee
January 27, 2021

The Rural Maryland Council **supports** Senate Bill 0056 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Telemedicine Reimbursement – Sunset Termination. This bill repeals termination for certain provisions of law relating to the eligibility of psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners who provide Assertive Community Treatment or mobile treatment services to Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients in a home or community-based setting through telemedicine to receive reimbursement for the health care services from the Program.

Maryland currently has several health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). These areas are designated as having inadequate access to or a shortage of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers. Telemedicine achieves significant cost savings and improves health outcomes for designated HPSA areas by enabling vulnerable populations to receive critical and life-saving treatment regardless of economic means, physical ability, or residence. Additionally, telemedicine has become an essential health service during the COVID-19 pandemic with access to in-person services limited or not available in many of these areas.

According to the American Telemedicine Association, the practice of medicine by telemedicine, including the issuance of any prescription via electronic means, shall be held to the same prevailing and usually accepted standards of medical practice as those in traditional in-person settings. Therefore, standards of practice requirements should apply to all licensees regardless of their method of providing care.

Senate Bill 0056 will allow for greater flexibility and availability in the delivery of health care in rural communities that lack access to health professionals.

The Council respectfully requests your favorable **support** of SB 0056.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) brings together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of Rural Maryland communities. We provide a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, economic and community development organizations, for-profit and nonprofit corporations, and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information, and address in a more holistic way the special needs and opportunities in Rural Maryland.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”