



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Senate Bill 56
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
Telemedicine Reimbursement – Sunset
Senate Finance Committee- January 27, 2021
SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2021 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials. **WDC urges the passage of HB0056.**

Racial and ethnic minorities have less access to medical and behavioral health services than white people, are less likely to receive needed care, and are more likely to receive poor-quality care when they are treated. Individuals from communities of color, working class residents, or individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health. Increased flexibility around the delivery of telehealth means that Marylanders can access medical and behavioral health treatment from their homes and on their phones. It protects providers and consumers from exposure to the coronavirus, ensures continuity of care for individuals, and expands overall access to treatment. This service expansion has become a vital part of Maryland's continuum of care. The Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club is supporting multiple bills to preserve these enhancements.

This bill repeals the termination provisions in Maryland law relating to the eligibility of psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners who provide assertive community treatment (ACT) or mobile treatment to Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients in a home or community-based setting through telemedicine and to receive reimbursement for these health care services from the Program.

- Telehealth has been a lifeline for Marylanders who have received mental health and substance use disorder treatments during the COVID-19 pandemic. This bill would allow those services to continue to be reimbursed even after the COVID-19 health emergency.
- This bill will improve access to services for people who live in medically underserved communities where services are not available, or have transportation difficulties due to disability or cost. As a result this bill will improve health disparities for vulnerable populations, especially women and children.

We ask for your support for SB0056 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President