



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

**Testimony on HB 551
Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage and
Reimbursement of Telehealth Services**

Health & Government Operations Committee

February 10, 2021

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB) respectfully requests that you give House Bill 551 a favorable report, allowing providers to continue using Telehealth as an option in providing mental health and substance use services in Maryland.

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, MAYSB mental health and substance use providers found that telehealth service options were a critical component of clients' engagement, care, stabilization, and recovery. Telehealth has proven itself as an integral method to maintaining consistent therapy and a quality connection to our clients. MAYSB providers have not only kept active clients but have admitted many new clients using a combination of in-person and telehealth services. Telehealth provided an instant method to continue seeing active clients during the initial phases of the crisis, helped avoid gaps in treatment, and provided timelier crisis 0maintain the integrity of services while providing our clients with options.

In addition to the above merits of telehealth, many providers have seen greater consistency with attendance, with reduced no-shows for appointments. Telehealth provides various scheduling options and an increased ability to offer same/next day sessions, giving clients more flexibility as they manage the new day to day challenges of remote work, virtual education, and potential exposures.

Looking forward, we know telehealth will allow for new ways to engage clients whose attendance was inconsistent, or who had difficulty getting to appointments due to transportation, schedule conflicts, or mental health issues impacting daily functioning. As an example, for someone who has an anxiety-related disorder, leaving home can be anxiety-producing. With telehealth, therapists can continue to work with the individual.

Telehealth has allowed resistant or medically compromised family members to engage in their child's treatment, providing a more comprehensive approach and outcome for families. It has also allowed for intervention with a client while in their environment. For people in some counties, the distance clients travel to appointments can be challenging. Many families do not have reliable transportation or the funds for fuel.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully ask you to support this bill.

Respectfully Submitted: Liz Park, PhD
MAYSB Chair
lpark@greenbeltmd.gov

*c/o Greenbelt Cares Youth and Family Services
25 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770 * Phone: 301-345-6660*