

OPPOSED HB132
Health - Mental and Emotional Disorders - Consent (Mental Health Access Initiative)

Julie Sharpe
3980 Hunting Creek Rd
Huntingtown MD 20639

I am a mom of four school-aged kids. I oppose HB132 that suggests they are ready to make their own mental healthcare decisions.

My kids are responsible and smart, but they are kids. They don't understand that a diagnosis has consequences that could follow them for life. Of course we hope a mental healthcare provider would have my kids' best interests at heart, but a provider sees many patients. Mistakes are possible. It is too much for us to expect a kid to be his or her own advocate against any misdiagnosis, for example.

Having kids' best interest at heart is a noble assumption, but then I read about the Boy Scout or Catholic Church or olympic coach scandals. Of course I as a parent can't but seek to protect my kids from this sort of inappropriate access. It is horrifying to imagine that my child might locate services by a provider he or she did not properly vet and then suffer under that care—while I remain unaware.

Obviously, children should be able to receive services they need. But it is not true that parents are a barrier to these services, and it is unclear how removing parents allows kids to more easily secure these services. Please don't make children responsible for decisions best made by their parents.

Please do not support HB132.

Sincerely,

Julie Sharpe