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February 11, 2022

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Economic Matters Committee  
Room 231, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Bill: HB 439 – Workers’ Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – 9-1-1 Specialists**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists from throughout the state, is writing in **SUPPORT** of **HB 439 – Worker’s Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – 9-1-1 Specialists**.

We applaud and strongly support the intent of this bill that recognizes the potential negative impact that serving as a first responder can have upon one’s mental health and longer-term health. PTSD is a well-known reaction to finding oneself in traumatic situations often encountered by our first responders. We now know that chronic, untreated forms of PTSD can make alterations to brain function that would place our first responders at risk for further harm or impair their judgement to the point others might suffer harm. Providing first responders with the opportunity to seek help for this issue by affirming it can be one of many occupational diseases is a step in the right direction.

Secondly, we, strongly support the inclusion of Psychologists as one of the mental health specialists uniquely qualified to evaluate the mental health status of adults.

**For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 439.** If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the MPA Executive Director, Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE at 410-992-4258 or [exec@marylandpsychology.org](mailto:exec@marylandpsychology.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

*Linda McGhee*

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., JD  
President

*R. Patrick Savage, Jr.*

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs