



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 9, 2022

HB 935

Health and Health Insurance - Behavioral Health Services - Expansion (Behavioral Health System Modernization Act)

House Government and Operations Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

House Bill 935 includes a variety of reforms and enhancements designed to meet the increasing demand for high quality mental health and substance use care. It will increase comprehensive community-based treatment by expanding Maryland’s network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, improve health outcomes and treatment quality by increasing the use of measurement-based care in behavioral health and primary care settings, strengthen the behavioral health workforce by expanding resources for peers support networks and peer recovery specialists, improve care for children and youth by increasing the availability of home- and community-based wraparound services, and reduce reliance on law enforcement and emergency departments by ensuring stable reimbursement for crisis response services.

Those experiencing mental illness are among the most marginalized and underserved in our society. The Catholic Church through its parishes, charities and other ministries reaches out pastorally to those struggling with mental illness. Because the Catholic faith embraces an integrated view of the human person as both corporeal and spiritual, we welcome the sciences as one pathway to knowledge of the human person. Pope St. John Paul II said "*Whoever suffers from mental illness always bears God's image and likeness in themselves, as does every human being. In addition, they always have the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such.*"

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 935.