



TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Guy Guzzone

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 362 – *Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics – Established*

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC) is the federally designated Primary Care Association for Delaware and Maryland Community Health Centers. As the backbone of the primary care safety net, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are united by a shared mission to ensure access to high-quality health care to all individuals, regardless of ability to pay. FQHCs are non-profit organizations providing comprehensive primary care to the medically underserved and uninsured. MACHC supports its members in the delivery of accessible, affordable, cost effective, and quality primary health care to those most in need. To this end, MACHC **supports** Senate Bill 362.

Senate Bill 362 establishes a framework for the establishment of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCS). CCBHCS are modeled after FQHCs, including the provision of services, regardless of insurance or ability to pay. They are federally designated and provide a comprehensive range of outpatient mental health and substance use treatment, care coordination with other providers and services, and connection to other systems and supports. CCBHCs must provide nine core services, including services for children and youth, 24/7 crisis intervention, peer supports, substance use treatment, and primary health screening and monitoring.

In the States that implement the CCBHC model, many FQHCs have qualified to serve as CCBHCs in addition to their FQHC designation and/or they have partnered with CCBHCs to broaden the services provided in the medical underserved areas in which they are located. Other states with the CCBHC model in place have seen increased access to care, reductions in emergency department and inpatient utilization, a mitigation of behavioral health workforce challenges, higher engagement post discharge from hospitals, improved utilization of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders, and improved integration with physical care.

Senate Bill 362 will improve behavioral health outcomes, save money, and keep people out of crisis. A favorable report is requested.