



HB 121 – Mental Health – Treatment Plans for Individuals In Facilities - Requirements

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Date: February 7, 2023

POSITION: Favorable

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for a loved one with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to family members with a child, youth or adult with a mental health, substance use or gambling challenge.

MCF strongly supports HB 121.

It sometimes is a challenge for individuals committed to mental health facilities to receive adequate treatment and discharge planning. This failure can lead to unnecessarily long stays, and poor outcomes upon an individual's release.

HB 121, by requiring the development of robust treatment plans and discharge plans, will do much to address this challenge. MCF especially appreciates the requirements in the bill that the involvement of families or other representatives be encouraged in the development of treatment plans. We know that a family member can be an individual's best advocate, but too often they are not included in these important decisions.

Finally, the provisions in the bill that people approved by the admitted individual can intercede and ask for a reassessment of an individual's treatment plan are necessary components. It is not uncommon for a committed individual to perceive that they have no power over their treatment plan, even when they feel that the plan is not helpful, or be unable to successfully articulate their concerns. By allowing family members or other representatives to advocate for the committed individual when treatment plans are thought to be inadequate, the bill will do much to improve the overall quality of treatment plans.

For these reasons we urge a favorable report on HB 121..

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