



**House Health & Government Operations Committee
March 21, 2023**

**Senate Bill 283
Mental Health - Workforce Development - Fund Established
Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 283 to establish a workgroup and a fund to address the workforce shortage that exists among professionals in the mental health and substance use disorder treatment fields. We commend the sponsor to taking such a thoughtful approach to this issue by creating a workgroup of appropriate stakeholders to thoroughly examine the gaps in the workforce, and recommend policy and funding changes that can break down the barriers that prevent more from entering these health care fields.

The way I know there's a workforce shortage among substance use disorder treatment programs is what happens in meetings. Whether they're in person or still virtual, when groups of treatment providers gather for monthly membership meetings, there are always people flagging that they're looking for a clinical supervisor, a medical director, a certified or licensed counselor. The discussion most often turns to money – with one provider talking about losing a good employee because they were offered a signing bonus by another program. Salaries are big concern, but there's also a pathway issue.

With these changes, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 283.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.