



Maryland Community Health System

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| Committee: | House Health and Government Operations |
| Bill: | Senate Bill 283 – Mental Health - Workforce Development - Fund Established |
| Hearing Date: | March 21, 2023 |
| Position: | Support |

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports Senate Bill 283 – Mental Health – Workforce Development – Fund Established. The bill establishes a stakeholder workgroup to evaluate and make recommendations on programs that can address the behavioral health professional shortage. If funds are identified, the Department can implement those recommendations which may include tuition assistance and support for clinical placements.

As a network of federally qualified health centers, we provide behavioral health services to underserved communities. We employ a wide range of practitioners – including licensed clinical social workers, licensed clinical and professional counselors, and psychologists. We are in the midst of a severe behavioral health professional shortage, making it very difficult to meet the needs of our patients, many of whom suffer from complex co-occurring behavioral and somatic health illnesses.

We would be eager to participate in the workgroup, so that we could add our perspective on how behavioral health can be integrated with somatic health. Our health centers provide comprehensive somatic, behavioral, and oral health care.

We strongly request a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.