



February 22, 2024

**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 525 Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment, crisis response, and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 525 Labor and Employment—Equal Pay for Equal Work—Wage Range Transparency, which is a common-sense legislation that will strengthen Maryland’s equal pay laws by requiring transparency around salary ranges in job postings.

Systemic racism, gender inequities, and other forms of oppression continue to inequitably impact economic opportunities, compensation structures, performance review practices and the culture of organizations. The impact extends beyond race, intersecting with oppression based on gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, and other identities. Pay wage transparency can also help address the persistent gender- and race-based wage gaps that disproportionately impact women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). When an employer shares the range they plan on paying for a position on job postings, it is a win-win for both employers and job seekers. SB 525 would help address this by requiring that all job listings include the salary range for the position.

Many employers in Maryland, including state and local governments and non-profit organizations, such as BHSB, already use this best practice. In 2023, BHSB began to include salaries and wages in job postings. This level of transparency has helped BHSB to attract and retain talent, and avoid the potential wasted resources from interviewing candidates who are seeking a salary outside the organization’s budget for the position. It also reduces biases by ensuring that we are paying for the requirements of the job, regardless of experience, degree, or licensure that a candidate brings to the job. Since posting salaries and wages in job descriptions, BHSB has been able to fill vacancies more quickly, which we believe gives the organization a competitive advantage.

There are still too few organizations providing salary ranges, however, evidence shows it supports employer recruitment and retention and promotes equity by being transparent about salary/wages for jobs. **As such, BHSB urges the Senate Finance Committee to pass SB 525.**

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