



March 4, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building – 3 East  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Oppose – Senate Bill 931: Workers’ Compensation – Rehabilitation Practitioners – Licensed Social Workers

Dear Chair Beidle and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS/WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS oppose Senate Bill 931: Workers’ Compensation – Rehabilitation Practitioners – Licensed Social Workers (SB 931). Currently, the only professions that can perform mental illness-based worker's comp cases are physicians/psychiatrists and psychologists. Generally, in order to do this, a physician or psychologist must first determine whether or not the evaluatee has reached "maximum medical improvement" (MMI). Per the Department of Labor, MMI "is when the covered illness is stabilized and is unlikely to improve with or without additional medical treatment." Thus, under SB 931, a social worker with exponentially less mental health education, residency, and required patient care hours through training would be assessing the adequacy of a physician's or psychologist's care.

MPS/WPS believe that providing evaluation services for workers’ compensation claims related to permanent impairments involving behavioral or mental disorders is an ill advised expansion of a social worker’s scope of practice for they lack the specific medical training and expertise in mental health. The quality and accuracy of evaluations performed by licensed social workers who do not have the same level of training and experience as physicians or psychologists in diagnosing and assessing mental health conditions may lead to incorrect diagnoses or inadequate treatment recommendations.

Therefore, for all the reasons above, MPS/WPS ask the committee for an unfavorable report on SB 931. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee