

SCHWARTZ, METZ & WISE, P.A.

ATTORNEYS

20 WEST STREET
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TEL: 410-244-7000

FAX: 410-269-5443

TO: The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Nathaniel T. Oaks

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Joseph A. Schwartz, III
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: March 31, 2015

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 971 – *Public Health - Substance Abuse Treatment Outcomes Partnership Fund*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC), we support House Bill 971.

The Substance Abuse Treatment Outcomes Partnership Fund (Fund) is a program that provides grant funding to local jurisdictions to match or supplement funding for programs that those jurisdictions provide with respect to substance abuse treatment for individuals that are comprised of the “eligible populations” defined under the program. Funding is provided subject to availability of funds in the program and upon application by a jurisdiction that demonstrates that they are providing new and/or expanded substance abuse treatment services to the targeted populations, and also demonstrates that the program has outcome and evaluation measures incorporated into its design. State funding under this program may only supplement funding already to be expended by the local jurisdiction.

House Bill 971 makes several critical amendments to the Fund. Most importantly, it adds “eligible functions” to the “eligible populations” to enable jurisdictions to apply for funding to supplement programs that provide critical services. These functions include: transportation to and from treatment services; treatment, prevention, or coordination staff; data sharing services among counties and other appropriate treatment providers; education or outreach programs and materials; in-community emergency behavioral health services or crisis stabilization units; and behavioral health programs in schools. It also adds “drug offenders under the supervision of the courts” to the list of eligible populations and allows local jurisdictions to define “in-kind” services that will be provided by the jurisdiction to meet funding requirements under the program. These proposed changes will enhance the effectiveness of the Fund by enabling grant funds, as available, to be utilized to supplement a broader array of services and programs that local jurisdictions have already

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undertaken to address substance abuse treatment needs for the identified at-risk populations.

Finally, House Bill 971 charges the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, to make it a priority to provide support for substance abuse treatment and prevention, and also charges the Maryland State Department of Education, in conjunction with other stakeholders, to develop and provide recommendations regarding the establishment of collaborative community-based substance abuse prevention and education and treatment programs for adolescents. In our current efforts to address the increase in substance abuse and overdose deaths, the particular needs of adolescents, which differ from adults, are often overlooked. Passage of House Bill 971 will strengthen an existing program and focus attention on the needs of the adolescent population that is often overlooked.

A favorable report is recommended.

For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Joseph A. Schwartz, III
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
(410) 244-7000