



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 506 – Maryland Department of Health – Mental Health and Substance Use
Disorder Services – Needs Assessment Study
Position: *Support***

Bill Summary

SB 506 would require the Department of Health to conduct a study to determine the existing capacity and estimated unmet needs for mental health and substance use disorder services by region of the state; require that the study include a review of issues related to certain services; authorize the department to contract with an entity to conduct a certain study; require the governor to include \$5 million in the state budget in fiscal year 2021 for the study; and more.

MHA Position

Under Maryland's new Total Cost of Care agreement with the federal government, Maryland's hospitals are working to lower costs and improve population health. In addition to treating illness and injury, hospitals are reaching out beyond their four walls to keep people well and improve the health of the communities they serve. The result: hospitals are taking care of the whole person, empowering patients and families, coordinating care among different providers, and addressing social factors, such as the behavioral health epidemic, that influence people's health.

Maryland's hospitals support SB 506 because it takes an important step toward addressing the state's ongoing behavioral health crisis. Maryland's behavioral health care system is fragile, fragmented and underfunded. Policymakers and health care providers alike agree that a coordinated, sustained effort among stakeholders is needed to develop a supportive, recovery-oriented statewide system for those who have a serious mental illness or substance use disorder.

Maryland's hospitals recognized the need for such a coordinated effort early on, and in June 2015 formed the Maryland Hospital Association Behavioral Health Task Force. The task force, consisting of hospital executives and experts in mental health and substance abuse, has issued numerous reports:

- An assessment of behavioral health services provided in Maryland's hospitals
- A Roadmap to an Essential, Comprehensive System of Behavioral Health Care in Maryland
- A report on Emergency Department Discharge Protocols for Patients with Substance Use Disorders and Opioid Overdoses in Maryland Hospitals
- Behavioral Health Discharge Delays in Maryland Hospitals
 - <https://www.mhaonline.org/transforming-health-care/healthy-hospitals-healthy-communities/behavioral-health>

MHA continues to work with behavioral health community providers and other stakeholders to develop solutions to this crisis. However, the state is best positioned to create a statewide comprehensive needs assessment.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report.