

## Preserve access to behavioral health treatment

There is a severe nationwide shortage of psychiatrists. It will only get worse: by 2030, the federal government predicts that the supply of psychiatrists will shrink by 27% while demand rises, resulting in *a net shortfall of 43% of psychiatrists needed to fill demand*.

**Maryland needs to act today to avoid disruptions in treatment capacity caused by the psychiatric shortage. HB 1122 is an immediate solution.**

Current regulations require outpatient mental health clinics (OMHCs) to have a psychiatrist in the non-treating role of a medical director onsite for 20 hours per week. As OMHCs are unable to find psychiatrists to serve this administrative function, they are in danger of shutting down.

HB 1122 allows advance practice psychiatric nurses to fulfill the role of medical director in OMHCs, *as allowed by their scope of practice*. This non-treatment role guides the administrative functions of the clinic through review of policies, consultation to staff, supervision of policy implementation on medication handling and other administrative functions.

## Existing impact of MD's psychiatric shortage

- In Baltimore County, a CBH member has been seeking a psychiatrist to serve as a medical director unsuccessfully for over a year. Their inability to locate a psychiatrist prevents them from getting licensed to expand services.
- On the Eastern Shore, a CBH member recruited for a psychiatrist as medical director for over a year, while six NPs contacted him to express interest in the position.

## MDH: Shortage is a major barrier to access

“Gaps still remain in acute care services, outpatient and residential treatment services as well as other support and community-based services. An analysis of the PBHS [public behavioral health system] over the past three years indicates that there are unmet needs in all of these areas. **A shortage of behavioral health workforce and transportation are two of the major barriers to access to behavioral health services.**”

- Maryland Department of Health, Joint Chairmen's Report: Statewide Review of Behavioral Health Workforce and Capacity (January 2019)