

HB 548 Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances

Health and Government Operations Committee

February 21, 2024

Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of House Bill 548.

HB 548 establishes a task force to study and make recommendations related to the use of natural psychedelic substances.

In 2015, MHAMD launched [BrainFutures](#), a national nonprofit dedicated to improving human outcomes by assessing and advancing practical applications of new scientific understanding of the brain. BrainFutures brings together diverse stakeholders, policymakers, funders, innovators and influencers to accelerate national adoption of effective practices for both brain health optimization and the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders.

In 2021, BrainFutures launched a three-part issue brief series and coalition-building effort focused on psychedelic-assisted therapy.¹ These therapies hold promise for treating some of the most intractable mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and alcohol use disorder. With studies at top research institutions like Johns Hopkins, New York University, and Imperial College London showing compelling results, psychedelic medicine is rapidly gaining broad public attention.

At the same time, the complexity of issues surrounding the equitable adoption of these treatments – in particular, around how to ensure successful adoption within the behavioral health field – is significant. Professional practice guidelines, training standards, and unified reimbursement strategies that will enable providers to receive equitable reimbursement from payers for delivering psychedelic-assisted therapy are all major policy areas that must be considered and defined.

BrainFutures can provide the task force with a wealth of information about these issues and help determine how best to responsibly advance the use of psychedelic substances in a responsible, safe and data driven manner. **Accordingly, we request an amendment adding the Executive Director of BrainFutures, or the Executive Director's designee, to the task force membership.**

For these reasons, upon adoption of this amendment, MHAMD supports HB 548 and urges a favorable report.

¹ <https://www.brainfutures.org/mental-health-treatment/psychedelic-assisted-therapy-pat/>