

**Senate Bill 859 Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025**

Budget and Taxation Committee

March 5, 2025

**Position: SUPPORT**

The 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 Senate Bill 859.

SB 859 modifies a range of corporate and individual income tax rules and credits to increase revenue and create a more equitable state tax system.

Maryland is contending with a significant budget crisis and unprecedented levels of uncertainty at the federal level. MHAMD recognizes the challenge this poses for state policymakers and understands that difficult decisions will have to be made.

These challenges notwithstanding, there remains critical unmet need across the state that we are working to address. Nearly a third of Maryland adults with anxiety or depression do not get needed counseling or therapy,<sup>1</sup> over 1,500 Marylanders lost their lives to an overdose in 2024,<sup>2</sup> and more than 36% of Maryland high school students have reported feeling persistently sad or hopeless with 18% of those students having seriously considered suicide.<sup>3</sup>

Addressing this unmet need will require strategic investments to expand access to community- and school-based mental health and substance use care, bolster Maryland's behavioral health workforce, and increase the availability of crisis response services that are designed to address the unique needs of various populations. These are investments that will improve the health of our society and ultimately save the state money through a reduction in preventable hospital emergency department utilization, homelessness and criminal justice involvement. But there are upfront costs that require additional revenue.

The Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025 will create a more equitable tax system and raise the revenue necessary to build a Maryland where everyone can thrive. For these reasons, MHAMD supports SB 859 and urges a favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/maryland/#:~:text=Unmet%20Need%20and%20Barriers%20to%20Care,Unmet%20need%20refers&text=As%20shown%20in%20the%20figure%20below%2C%20in%20May%202022%2C%20among,the%20U.S.%20average%20of%2028.2%25>

<sup>2</sup> <https://health.maryland.gov/dataoffice/Pages/mdh-dashboards.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS) 2022-2023, Maryland Department of Health, <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/YRBS-2022-2023.aspx>