January 29, 2014

SB 198 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telemedicine
Senate Finance Committee
Thomas M. Middleton, Chairman

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Addictions Directors Council (MADC) supports the passage of SB 198, which would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide reimbursement for services delivered by telemedicine and would repeal the limitation on the health care services delivered by telemedicine that are eligible for reimbursement. The Maryland Addictions Directors Council (MADC) is an association of professionals who are specialists within the behavioral health profession who provide prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, support and wellness services for people with substance use, co-occurring and process addiction disorders. Our mission is to advocate for quality addictions services that promote healthy individuals, strong families and thriving communities.

Broader access to telemedicine services is especially beneficial to individuals with substance use disorders living in areas where there are shortages of addiction specialist and other behavioral health professionals. When individuals are not able to receive timely access to substance use disorder services, they may not access the treatment they need. We know that when people do not have immediate access to substance use disorder services then the chances of relapse are very high. Currently, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has piloted tele-mental health services in jurisdictions designated rural geographic areas. This bill will expand this option to all health services including addiction programs throughout the state. By increasing access to services the state will be helping individuals with substance use disorders to recover and lead healthy lives.

We urge a positive report on SB 198, which will increase access to substance use disorder services throughout Maryland. Thank you for your consideration.