



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JOEL N. BELLER
Acting Director of Government Affairs

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

MIA R. GOGEL
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: SB 241

TITLE: Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services - 9-8-8 Trust Fund

SPONSOR: Senator Augustine

COMMITTEE: Finance

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 8, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 241 Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services - 9-8-8 Trust Fund. This legislation would secure a sustainable source of funding for the 9-8-8 program to serve as the call number for a suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline.

Suicide is a devastating issue impacting communities each day. The isolation and anxiety brought on by Covid-19 pandemic has amplified this already pervasive mental health crisis. Recent upticks in suicides are a wakeup call for us as leaders to enact the improvements needed in our current mental health infrastructure.

Having a sustained source of funding for the 9-8-8 hotline acknowledges the long term need for this vital program. Maintaining 9-8-8 as the primary number for the State's behavioral health crisis hotline provides an accessible resource for those in crisis. This bill would ensure that the department of health is better equipped to handle life threatening mental health crises across the State. Supporting the mental health needs of citizens throughout this pandemic has been a priority of Baltimore County and this legislation will greatly assist this efforts.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** on Senate Bill 241. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.