



10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Ste 910, Columbia, MD 21044. Office 410-992-4258. Fax: 410-992-7732. www.marylandpsychology.org

March 30, 2022

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Delegate Shane Pendergrass
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House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SB 241 Behavioral Health Crisis Services 9-8-8 Trust Fund**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the **HGO Committee to favorably report on Senate Bill 241.**

The Maryland Psychological Association asks that the committee vote in favor of adequately funding this crisis hotline and the associated funding for the coordination and delivery of crises services for those experiencing behavioral health issues. We strongly support the establishment of a set aside fund as these mental health services have been sorely underfunded in the past.

Hotlines often serve as a frontline resource for people experiencing suicidality and other mental health crises. Not only do they work to lessen the immediacy of one's crisis, but hotlines often serve as entry points into the world of mental health services, by providing those in crisis with resources they might not otherwise have thought to access. During this time of increased awareness of mental health needs, the establishment of this trust fund to ensure the existence of a statewide hotline seems to be a prudent move.

The MPA, therefore urges you to favorably report on SB 241 to ensure adequate funding for this crisis hotline.

Please feel free to contact MPA's Executive Director Stefanie Reeves at exec@marylandpsychology.org if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Linda McGhee

R. Patrick Savage, Jr.

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., JD
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs