

Chapter 126

(Senate Bill 321)

AN ACT concerning

Baltimore City and Baltimore County – Police ~~Mental~~ Mental Behavioral Health Units – Pilot Program

FOR the purpose of requiring, to the extent practicable, on or before a certain date, the Baltimore City and Baltimore County police departments to establish ~~mental~~ behavioral health units; requiring a ~~mental~~ behavioral health unit to consist of at least a certain number of officers who are specially trained to understand the needs of ~~mentally ill~~ individuals with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders and in cultural sensitivity and cultural competency; requiring the training to be developed in consultation with the Behavioral Health Administration in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; establishing the purpose and goals of a ~~mental~~ behavioral health unit; requiring the Baltimore City and Baltimore County police departments to report to the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the construction of this Act; requiring the Baltimore City Police Department to complete a certain study and make certain recommendations; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to police ~~mental~~ behavioral health units.

BY adding to
Article – Public Safety
Section 3–510
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2011 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Safety

3–510.

(A) ~~ON TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, ON OR BEFORE JUNE~~ **OCTOBER 1, 2016, THE BALTIMORE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT EACH SHALL ESTABLISH A ~~MENTAL~~ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT.**

(B) ~~A MENTAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT SHALL CONSIST OF AT LEAST SIX OFFICERS WHO ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED:~~

(1) TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF ~~MENTALLY ILL~~ INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, OR CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS; AND

(2) IN CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY.

(C) TRAINING FOR OFFICERS IN A ~~MENTAL~~ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT SHALL BE DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE.

(D) THE PURPOSE OF A ~~MENTAL~~ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT IS TO RESPOND TO EMERGENCY CALLS INVOLVING AN INDIVIDUAL SUSPECTED OF HAVING A MENTAL ~~ILLNESS~~ HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, OR CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER.

(E) THE ~~GOAL~~ GOALS OF A ~~MENTAL~~ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT ~~IS~~ ARE TO:

(1) DIVERT ~~MENTALLY ILL~~ INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, OR CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS INTO TREATMENT INSTEAD OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM; AND

(2) PREVENT AND REDUCE UNNECESSARY USE OF FORCE AND LOSS OF LIFE IN SITUATIONS INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, OR CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act may not be construed to interfere with or replace any existing crisis intervention team programs in Baltimore City or Baltimore County.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1, 2015, the Baltimore City Police Department shall complete a study and make recommendations regarding the establishment of a behavioral health unit, including recommendations on the structure, size, cost, potential funding sources, and timeline for establishing the behavioral health unit.

SECTION ~~2~~ 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before October 1, 2018, the Baltimore City Police Department and the Baltimore County Police Department shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on the number of emergency calls that their ~~mental~~ behavioral health units responded to in 2016, 2017, and 2018, and the disposition of those calls.

SECTION ~~2~~ 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2015. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and 9 months and, at the

end of June 30, 2019, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 12, 2015.