



Cornerstone
Montgomery

February 8, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing in support of the Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members & Veterans (SB0904/HB1515) that calls for the creation of a state fund to provide matching grants to community-based organizations providing evidence-based behavioral health treatments for service members (including the Guard and Reserves), veterans, and their family members. There is great need for behavioral health services among veterans, service members and their families in Maryland. There are approximately 399,000 veterans living in Maryland, of which an estimated 24,000 have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Across the state, approximately 10,000 veterans are dealing with post-traumatic stress or major depression. We know that veterans comprise 18% of all deaths by suicide in Maryland and this group is twice as likely as non-veterans to die by suicide. Community-based organizations play a crucial role in providing timely, evidence-based services that fill the existing gaps in the VA system.

Cornerstone Montgomery is the largest and most comprehensive provider of behavioral health services in Montgomery County, MD. Each year we serve more than 2,200 individuals. We specialize in the provision of comprehensive, community- and evidence-based mental health and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder treatments and interventions. Access to timely evidence-based care is a constant issue; one that is exacerbated for veterans and their families. Having a strong network of community-based organizations able to provide such care is critical.

The Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program goes a long way towards solving the problem. We encourage its passage.

Sincerely,

Cari Guthrie Cho, LCSW-C
President & CEO