



February 11, 2020

The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support– SB 305: Public Safety - Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence

Dear Chairman Smith and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS supports Senate Bill 305: Public Safety - Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence (SB 305). Many consider crisis intervention services as a critical service in the provision of comprehensive mental health care. Such services not only provide an immediate need for crisis intervention, but they often help to prevent the use of higher levels of care such as inpatient hospitalization and emergency room visits. Collaboration between police and crisis mental health care providers is also a well-studied and effective collaboration.

SB 305 wisely promotes the education of police officers by mental health providers, which will ultimately result in more measured police interactions with citizens who are experiencing mental health care crises. In addition, coupling crisis providers with police who are responding to calls for mental health-related matters will result in better outcomes, including the use of less violent interventions by officers.

MPS asks the committee for a favorable report of SB 305. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society