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BILL NO.: **HB 293**

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

SPONSOR: Delegate K. Young

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 2, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 293 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 House Bill 293. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.