



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: HB0293 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services - 9-8-8 Trust Fund

SPONSOR: Delegates K. Young, Belcastro, Charkoudian, Forbes, Healey, Kaiser, Kerr, McComas, Reznik, and Ruth

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 293**, which establishes a special, nonlapsing fund in the State Budget to provide reimbursement for costs associated with designating and maintaining 9-8-8 as the federally mandated National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and mental health crisis hotline. The 9-8-8 bill will help prepare the state for the national 9-8-8 launch including supporting call centers and other services as a part of the crisis continuum.

The funding established by HB293 will be critically important to meet the anticipated three-fold increase in mental health-related emergency service calls resulting from the 9-8-8 hotline launch. Marylanders deserve easily accessible mental health crisis services and **HB293** is a first step towards this vision.

Individuals calling 9-8-8 will need community resources that are not in existence at this time or are currently underfunded, such as mobile crisis services and a crisis receiving center. The funding established in **HB293** will help fill gaps that have been increasingly apparent in the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased demand for behavioral health services. Without additional funding streams, citizens will call a number that does not have anything available to help them. This will be a frustrating experience and could lead them to avoid seeking mental health services in the future.

In Prince George's County, this funding could help support the Health Services Cost Review Commission crisis stabilization center, which is an important aspect of the 9-8-8 continuum for our County and is currently not funded at a level that will satisfy demand. For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 293** to strengthen the bill's impact and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.