



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building Room 240
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 293 – Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support HB 293, “Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services – 988 Trust Fund.”

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for approximately 800,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to over 460,000 members.

Kaiser Permanente supports HB 293 because it offers evidence-based approaches to expanding access to high quality crisis care services:

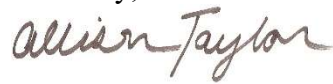
- **Regional Crisis Call Centers:** The bill creates a mandate for state funding for a regional 24/7 crisis call center that provides crisis intervention capabilities. 988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. While some areas may be currently able to connect to the Lifeline by dialing 988, this dialing code will be available to everyone across the United States starting on July 16, 2022 under a federal law passed in 2020.
- **Centrally Deployed Mobile Crisis Teams:** The bill calls for the development and implementation of mobile crisis services. Mobile crisis services are intensive community mental health services that provide face-to-face emergency response for mental health assessments, interventions, and evaluations as requested by families, hospitals, police, EMS, or others. Mobile crisis services are usually requested when there is suspicion of an individual being at risk of harm to themselves or others.

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.

- **Residential Crisis Stabilization Programs:** The bill calls for state funding for residential crisis stabilization programs to offer care for individuals who need support and observation outside of an Emergency Department setting.
- **Collaboration:** The bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to collaborate with SAMHSA, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the National Veterans Crisis Line, and other appropriate entities to develop and coordinate statewide improvements to crisis stabilization programs. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has developed standards for risk assessment and engagement of individuals at imminent risk of suicide and offer air traffic control quality coordination of crisis care in real-time.

For these reasons, Kaiser Permanente urges a favorable report of HB 293. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,



Allison Taylor
Director of Government Relations
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.