

HB 293 - SUPPORT
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HB 293 SUPPORT
Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services—9-8-8 Trust Fund

Health and Government Committee
February 2, 2022

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

I'm writing to you in support of HB 293 as a mental health advocate and as someone who has been helped by the behavioral health crisis line operated in Montgomery County by EveryMind. With escalating rates of mental health issues accompanying the pandemic, all Marylanders must have free, confidential 24/7 access to this essential service.

This bill designates 988 to be the phone number for Maryland's suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis hotline and establishes a sustainable funding source to support existing behavioral health crisis call centers in Maryland.

Congress designated 988 as the new phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Once 988 will go live in July of this year, all phone companies will route 988 calls to local crisis call centers that are part of the Lifeline network. It is expected that calls to the Lifeline will significantly increase when the new number goes live. Maryland needs to ensure that its existing eight local call centers are adequately resourced to support this influx of calls for help.

I strongly urge the House Health and Government Operations Committee to pass HB 293. Lives depend on it.

Sincerely yours,

Robin Yasinow
Rockville, MD