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January 31, 2022

Shane Pendergrass

Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

House Office Building

Room 241

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **HB 293 Behavioral Health Crisis Services 9-8-8 Trust Fund**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Delegate Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the **House Health and Government Operations Committee to favorably report on House Bill 293.**

The Maryland Psychological Association asks that the committee vote in favor of adequately funding this crisis hotline and the associated funding for the coordination and delivery of crises services for those experiencing behavioral health issues. We strongly support the establishment of a set aside fund as these mental health services have been sorely underfunded in the past.

Hotlines often serve as a frontline resource for people experiencing suicidality and other mental health crises. Not only do they work to lessen the immediacy of one's crisis, but hotlines often serve as entry points into the world of mental health services, by providing those in crisis with resources they might not otherwise have thought to access. During this time of increased awareness of mental health needs, the establishment of this trust fund to ensure the existence of a statewide hotline seems to be a prudent move.

The MPA, therefore urges you to favorably report on HB 293 to ensure adequate funding for this crisis hotline.

Please feel free to contact MPA's Executive Director Stefanie Reeves at [exec@marylandpsychology.org](mailto:exec@marylandpsychology.org) if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

*Linda McGhee*

*R. Patrick Savage, Jr.*

Linda McGhee, Psy.D., JD  
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs