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BILL NO.: **House Bill 513**

TITLE: **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
Program – Established**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Ebersole**

COMMITTEE: **Ways and Means**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 17, 2022**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 513 – Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program – Established. This legislation would establish the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program to promote positive mental and behavioral health practices for children.

Stay at home orders and social isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the social and mental health of Maryland’s children. In 2021, Baltimore County saw increased rates of depression among youth and many students struggling with virtual education. Protecting the health of children is a top priority of County Executive John Olszewski. For children with developmental and behavioral struggles, early intervention is key to ensuring a bright future. This can be accomplished by providing equitable access to vital mental and behavioral health services for all children in Maryland.

House Bill 513 ensures the protection of young cognitive health by establishing a state funded program for the promotion of positive mental and behavioral health practices. This legislation would identify children who may suffer from developmental, emotional, social or behavioral issues in grades kindergarten through second for enrollment. Children and their families would be given referrals for more specific treatment, training to address behavioral issues, and partnerships with community resources. It is critical that children and their families have access to the help they need to promote their well-being.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 513. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.