



February 3, 2023

**Health and Government Operations Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

HB 0271 988 Trust Fund – Funding

Baltimore Crisis Response Inc (BCRI) provides crisis services for Baltimore City and the surrounding area. BCRI manages and operates the 988 Regional Comprehensive Call Center serving Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carrol County and Howard County. BCRI also provides general mobile crisis response for Baltimore City and provides several residential programs for adults needing support with psychiatric stabilization and substance abuse. The mission is to provide timely and effective community based services in the least restrictive environment. All services are initiated through our 24/7 988 call center.

Quinita Garrett, Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc. is pleased to support HB 0271 988 Trust Fund – Funding. This bill provides much needed additional funding for the 988 Trust Fund to support reliable planning and capacity building for the Maryland 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline network.

Last year, Maryland established the 988 Trust Fund and dedicated funding for 988 Lifeline providers for essentially the first time. This funding was critical to support Maryland's transition to 988, the first nationwide three-digit access code for suicidal and behavioral health crisis calls and texts. The helplines that make up Maryland's Lifeline network provide free, 24/7 supportive counseling and safety planning to residents for decades, and the increased call volume and visibility associated with the transition to 988 demands new and continued state investment. Maryland communities need mental health and emotional support more than ever and investing in the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a critical way to provide that support.

BCRI, along with its sub vendors, is expecting to answer over 100,000 988 calls this year to support individuals in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County and Howard County. 988 has played an integral part in the lives of residents around the world. The HB 0271 Trust bill-funding is vital to maintain a robust and trained workforce that are instrumental to promoting community wellness and support.

Maryland has a strong foundation that can be built upon to create the robust 988 network that will keep residents safe and well, but continued investment is needed. Quinita Garrett, Baltimore Crisis response, Inc. **urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to pass HB 0271.**

