



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Victoria Venable, Legislative Director

HB 271 – 9-8-8 Trust Fund – Funding

DATE: February 7, 2023
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

On behalf of the Office of the Frederick County Executive, I urge the committee to give HB 271 – 9-8-8 Trust Fund – Funding a favorable report. To better meet the goal of the 9-8-8 system, the Frederick County Executive's Office supports a robust fund and requests strong coordination with 9-1-1 centers in the statewide initiative.

The new 9-8-8 National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides a direct connection to support for Marylanders experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, having thoughts of suicide, or needing assistance in supporting someone who may need crisis response. Frederick County has been working closely with local, state, and federal partners to build a crisis response system that meets the needs of our community. This includes the creation of a Frederick County Crisis Stabilization Center and coordination with the Mental Health Association, Frederick County Health Department, the Local Behavioral Health Authority, and Emergency Management.

Last year, this body passed SB241, which established the 9-8-8 trust fund and appropriated funding for fiscal years 2023 and 2024. HB271 ensures this crucial funding continues in fiscal year 2025.

We appreciate the state's attention to the need to coordinate this initiative with crisis call centers, mobile crisis team services, crisis stabilizations centers, and other behavioral health care services. We recommend including 9-1-1 centers in this list of partners. The approach to serving our residents in need must be holistic and coordinated whether initiated by contact from 9-8-8 or 9-1-1.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 271. On behalf of County Executive Fitzwater and the residents of Frederick County, I urge a favorable report.

Victoria Venable
Legislative Director
Office of the Frederick County Executive