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February 3, 2023

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Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **House Bill 271 – “9-8-8 Trust Fund – Funding”**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Health and Government Operations Committee to **FAVORABLY REPORT** on **House Bill 271**.

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 271 to ensure adequate funding for this crisis hotline.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 271. If we can be of any further assistance as the House – Health and Government Operations Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Pat Savage at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

Rebecca Resnik, Psy.D.

Rebecca Resnick, Psy.D.
President

R. Patrick Savage, Jr., Ph.D.

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