



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB0271

February 7, 2023

TO: Members of the Health and Government Affairs Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 0271 – 9–8–8 Trust Fund – Funding

POSITION: **Support**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 271.

HB 271 establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2025 of \$12.0 million to the 9-8-8 Trust Fund. Diversion from 9-1-1 and access to expanded 9-8-8 services are vital, and the BCA supports dedicated and expanded funding for this service.

In 2022, The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) designated 9-8-8 as the State's behavioral health crisis hotline. The maintenance of 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline, and the coordination and delivery of the continuum of behavioral health crisis response services in the State, is vital to ensuring that those experiencing behavioral health crises receive the help that they need. Diversion from 9-1-1 and access to 9-8-8 services provides crucial resources for de-escalating and resolving crises.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 271.