



March 25, 2025

House Appropriations Committee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

SB 599 - Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding

My name is Michelle Grigsby-Hackett, and I am the CEO of Affiliated Santé Group (Santé). Santé has provided behavioral health outpatient services since 1992 and critical behavioral health crisis response services since 1998. Our longstanding community behavioral health services have supported numerous individuals for over 30 years, with many of those services related to crisis events.

Santé strongly supports SB599 - Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program – Funding.

This bill would provide level funding to the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program for the next three years to maintain critical behavioral health care services.

The Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program was established in 2019 to build a more robust behavioral health crisis response system. These types of services provide immediate support when someone is experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Crisis services such as mobile crisis teams, urgent care clinics, and crisis residential beds are essential components of the behavioral health care continuum and provide an important alternative to calling 911 or going to the hospital Emergency Department.

The General Assembly mandated \$5 million for the last four years and the Behavioral Health Administration indicated that they plan to maintain it at this level for FY26. This stable funding has been used effectively to serve thousands of children and adults experiencing a crisis. It is also a smart investment that saves the state money in the long run by preventing higher hospital and criminal justice costs. The services funded by this program must be maintained to divert people away from these more expensive settings, especially considering the struggles the state continues to have with pediatric hospital overstay and lengthy ED wait times.

Through the crisis response grant, Santé has been able to serve over 10,000 individuals over the past 4 years in services including youth mobile crisis on the Eastern Shore, youth and adult mobile crisis in Carroll County, and youth urgent care in Baltimore County.

Through this funding Carroll County operates mobile crisis services for adults and youth 16 hours a day, 7 days a week including ability for direct law enforcement dispatch through police radios. These services have resulted in over:

- 8500 crisis calls,
- Over 2000 dispatches with 22% of those being minors, and
- Over 107 community education events over the last 3 years.

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Additionally, the funding allows an expansion of urgent care services to youth in Baltimore County. Through this funding we provided:

- 2000 diagnostic evaluations and
- 1500 psychiatric medication evaluations which have assisted in diverting individuals from hospitalization.

Lastly, the funding received through this grant provides child and adolescent mobile crisis services across 8 counties on the Eastern Shore. On average, we annually conduct:

- 335 dispatches for youth and adolescents,
- Diverted 86 minors from the emergency room and
- Diverted 27 minors from the criminal justice system last year
- Provided 71 referrals to outpatient mental health clinic services

Continuing funding for the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program is a vital investment. **Santé the House Appropriations Committee to consider this Senate bill and pass SB599.**

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