

Testimony for HB 713 – Favorable

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Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Lisa Shore and I am here on behalf of NAMI Maryland, as a person with family members with mental health issues, and as a daughter of mental health professionals. NAMI Maryland is part of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a grassroots organization that supports over 58,000 families and individuals with mental health conditions. They believe that, given support and resources, ALL people can thrive and contribute to their communities.

HB 713 takes successful legislation piloted by Anne Arundel County and expands it statewide. Anne Arundel County has been a leader in gun safety initiatives with their gun violence prevention task force and gun lock distribution through trusted partners such as public libraries. This proposed legislation prevents suicides by providing crisis response and mental health information at the point-of-sale for guns and ammunition. It is bipartisan – and provides information without judgement.

The United States is facing a suicide epidemic. Suicide is the leading cause of death in people ages 10-34 and a significant issue for our veterans. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, firearms are involved in 50% of suicide deaths and make suicide attempts more lethal. HB 713 provides life-saving information at the point of access to these lethal means, without in any way restricting an adult's right to own a firearm. Resources are an important tool in the efforts to reduce suicides and a collaborative way to address this public health issue. NAMI Maryland and I ask for a favorable report on this bill. Thank you.