



**COALITION**  
*for a Healthier Frederick County*

February 20, 2026

Written Testimony in Favor of the House Health Committee HB1012

Dear Chairperson,

My name is Malcolm Furgol, and I am the Executive Director for the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County. On behalf of the Coalition, I am testifying in support of House Bill 1012 which would support expansion of our Local Behavioral Health Authority's (LBHA) ability to conduct Suicide Fatality Review. As a community health nonprofit rooted in health equity, we have directly relied on the data available regarding suicide fatalities to inform how we communicate health information to our community.

Currently, the only Suicide Fatality Review that occurs is on the state level and not every death by suicide is reviewed. Reviewing the circumstances of a local fatality may allow us to develop more informed insights into how to prevent death by suicide in Frederick County. This effort will be an expansion of a well-established process that has been in place for years in Frederick County: the Overdose Fatality Review Team. Expanding the scope of that team to include review of suicide fatalities will help inform and guide our public health system of care.

Over the years, our organization has worked closely with the LBHA and the Frederick County Health Department regarding mental health and suicide prevention. Our previous mental health Local Health Improvement Process (LHIP) Workgroup partnered with the Health Department to establish our county's Suicide Prevention Coalition. One of my staff continues to actively participate in that body. We know from this work how important having accurate local data is on suicide and other mental health areas. Without this information we are at a disadvantage when it comes to planning interventions and programs to reduce suicide fatalities in our community.

I am testifying because as the Local Health Improvement Coalition for our county we are aware of the growing number of suicides in our community and the mental needs of community members. Our most recent Community Health Needs Assessment clearly identified mental health as an ongoing critical area of need with a high percentage of respondents to our survey citing isolation and other mental health issues as some of the biggest factors negatively impacting their overall health. As a result, addressing the barriers to mental health care is one of our current community health priorities, specifically working to reduce stigma and raise awareness of available mental health resources and how to access them.

I encourage the Committee to pass HB 1012 to ensure local communities throughout Maryland have access to the most accurate and actionable data regarding suicide.

Thank you to the Chair and members of the Committee for your consideration. I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 1012.

Malcolm Furgol  
Executive Director

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**Uniting our community *towards a healthier future***

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