

# MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 20, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall  
Health Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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Support: HB 1012: Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams - Authorization

Dear Chairwoman Bagnall & Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS/WPS represent over 1200 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS Supports: HB 1012: Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams – Authorization. Previously, this legislature took an important step by establishing a statewide Suicide Fatality Review Committee. That work is now well underway. The Committee recently completed their first full year of case reviews, with a focused examination of youth suicides involving firearms, the most common method of suicide death. The insights gained from these reviews have provided a deeper understanding of the complex systems, service gaps, and missed intervention points that do not appear in traditional surveillance systems, and our report was recently sent on to the Governor's office. They are now well into their second year of reviews, with a focus on suicides among older adults and the role of prescription medications in overdose. The statewide committee is functioning effectively and has demonstrated the value of multidisciplinary, confidential case review in identifying actionable prevention strategies. House Bill 1012 represents the natural and necessary next step.

Much like the highly successful opioid overdose fatality review model, local suicide fatality review teams would allow counties or municipalities to examine cases within their own communities and report findings back to the State Committee. Suicide prevention frequently happens at the county level. Local 988 providers, school systems, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, and behavioral health authorities vary significantly across jurisdictions. Having multidisciplinary local teams with firsthand knowledge of community systems will strengthen our ability to identify practical, locally tailored prevention strategies.

Local teams are also especially important when subpopulations are affected or when suicide clusters occur. Rapid, community-informed review of those deaths can help prevent additional loss of life. The structure outlined in this bill, including confidentiality protections and coordination with the State Committee, appropriately balances transparency with the privacy necessary for meaningful case review. It ensures that lessons learned locally can inform statewide strategy while preserving the integrity of the review process.

As usual, Maryland is leading the way. Our state has demonstrated that a thoughtful, public health-driven approach to suicide fatality review can produce high-quality analysis and credible recommendations. By authorizing local teams that coordinate with the State Committee, House Bill 1012 strengthens that framework and positions Maryland to continue serving as a model for the rest of the country.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at [lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society & Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee