



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall
Chair, House Health Committee
240 & 241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: House Bill 1012 —Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams -
Authorization—Letter of Support with Amendments**

Dear Chair Bagnall and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 1012 - Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams - Authorization. Effective October 1, 2026, HB 1012 would authorize a county or municipality to establish a local suicide fatality review team and require the local team to coordinate with the State Suicide Fatality Review Committee. The bill would also protect the deceased and their families or loved ones' privacy by exempting certain information from the Maryland Open Meetings Act or Maryland Public Information Act.

To ensure initial and ongoing coordination with the State Suicide Fatality Review Committee, and to avoid duplication of effort between the State and local jurisdictions, the Department proposes the attached amendments for the Committee's consideration. These amendments would (1) require the State Committee to establish a protocol with the local committee for review; (2) require the local committee to collect data and ensure its safe and confidential storage; (3) provide requested local reports to the State committee to improve coordination with State and local entities to prevent suicide deaths; (4) provide access to State health and related records for local committees; and (5) permit the Department to promulgate regulations to implement the legislation.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs at meghan.lynch@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD
Secretary of Health

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1012

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On Page 3, Line 27, After "...AS DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE LOCAL TEAM." and Before "5-1104" - INSERT

“(C) TO ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE, THE LOCAL TEAM SHALL:

(1) IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE TEAM, ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A PROTOCOL FOR THE LOCAL TEAM;

(2) SET AS ITS GOAL THE INVESTIGATION OF SUICIDE DEATHS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS;

(3) MEET AT LEAST QUARTERLY TO REVIEW THE STATUS OF SUICIDE FATALITY CASES, RECOMMEND ACTIONS TO IMPROVE COORDINATION OF SERVICES AND INVESTIGATIONS AMONG MEMBER AGENCIES, AND RECOMMEND ACTIONS WITHIN THE MEMBER AGENCIES TO PREVENT SUICIDE DEATHS;

(4) COLLECT AND MAINTAIN DATA AS REQUIRED BY THE STATE TEAM;

(5) ENSURE SAFE AND SECURE STORAGE OF PROTECTED INFORMATION AND RECORDS;

(6) PROVIDE REQUESTED REPORTS TO THE STATE TEAM, INCLUDING DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL CASES, STEPS TAKEN TO IMPROVE COORDINATION OF SERVICES AND INVESTIGATIONS, STEPS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE LOCAL TEAM WITHIN MEMBER AGENCIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON NEEDED CHANGES TO STATE AND LOCAL LAW, POLICY, AND PRACTICE TO PREVENT SUICIDE DEATHS.”

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 4, Line 1 - Before "(A) MEETINGS OF LOCAL TEAMS SHALL BE CLOSED TO...)"

- Insert

“(A) UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER

SUBTITLE 10 OF THIS TITLE, THE LOCAL TEAM SHALL HAVE ACCESS TO CERTAIN INFORMATION AND RECORDS.

(B) ON REQUEST OF THE CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF THE LOCAL TEAM AND AS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE LOCAL TEAM'S PURPOSE AND DUTIES, A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY SHALL IMMEDIATELY PROVIDE TO THE LOCAL TEAM ANY RECORDS OF THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE REVIEW OF A SPECIFIC FATALITY, INCLUDING:

(1) HOSPITAL RECORDS;

(2) OUTPATIENT CLINIC, HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, AND LABORATORY RECORDS;

(3) POLICE INVESTIGATION DATA;

(4) MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATIVE DATA;

(5) CAUSE-OF-DEATH INFORMATION IN VITAL RECORDS;

(6) SOCIAL SERVICES RECORDS; AND

(7) OTHER RECORDS FROM LOCAL OFFICES, AGENCIES, AND DEPARTMENTS.

(C) THE LOCAL TEAM MAY REQUEST THAT A PERSON WITH DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING A FATALITY PROVIDE THE LOCAL TEAM WITH INFORMATION NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE REVIEW OF THE PARTICULAR FATALITY, INCLUDING INFORMATION FROM:

(1) A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OR STAFF INVOLVED IN THE CARE OF THE DECEDENT; AND

(2) THE PERSON WHO FIRST RESPONDED TO A REPORT CONCERNING THE DECEDENT.

(D) THE LOCAL TEAM:

(1) MAY SHARE INFORMATION WITH OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES OR THEIR DESIGNEES AS THE LOCAL TEAM DETERMINES NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND

(2) SHALL COORDINATE WITH LOCAL CHILD FATALITY REVIEW AND DRUG OVERDOSE FATALITY REVIEW TEAMS TO SHARE AND RECEIVE INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE LOCAL TEAM'S FINDINGS AND TO ENSURE EFFICIENCY IN THE WORK OF THE TEAMS.

(E)

(1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ALL INFORMATION AND RECORDS ACQUIRED BY THE STATE TEAM IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS DUTIES:

I. SHALL BE CONFIDENTIAL;

II. SHALL BE EXEMPT FROM DISCLOSURE UNDER THE PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT; AND

III. MAY NOT BE SUBJECT TO DISCOVERY OR INTRODUCTION INTO EVIDENCE IN ANY PROCEEDINGS.
(2) INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED AS NECESSARY AND IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THIS SUBTITLE TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THIS SUBTITLE.
(F) MENTAL HEALTH RECORDS ARE SUBJECT TO THE ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS UNDER § 4-307 OF THIS ARTICLE FOR DISCLOSURE OF A MEDICAL RECORD DEVELOPED PRIMARILY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

5-1105”

AMENDMENT NO. 3

Page 5 - Line 4 Strike and Replace

“5-1105” with “5-1106”

AMENDMENT NO. 4

On page 6 Line(s) 22 and 23 - Strike and replace “SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.” with

“5-1107.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SUBTITLE, INCLUDING REGULATIONS ON:

(1) The protocols, procedures, methods, manner, and extent of all investigations and reviews by local teams;

(2) The manner in which data provided by the Department is stored and secured;

(3) The manner in which and extent to which information based on data provided by the Department shall be disseminated under this subtitle.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2026.”