

# SENATE BILL 561

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By: Senator Sydnor

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Community Violence Prevention**  
3 **Services – Reimbursement and Provision of Services**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing requirements and prohibitions governing the provision of  
5 community violence prevention services through telehealth under the Maryland  
6 Medical Assistance Program; requiring the Program to reimburse community  
7 violence prevention services that are provided in–person regardless of the location  
8 at which the services were provided; altering the minimum number of training and  
9 certification programs for certified violence prevention professionals that the  
10 Maryland Department of Health is required to approve; prohibiting certain entities  
11 that employ or contract with a certified violence prevention professional from being  
12 required to maintain an affiliation with a hospital or trauma center; and generally  
13 relating to community violence prevention services provided under the Maryland  
14 Medical Assistance Program.

15 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
16 Article – Health – General  
17 Section 15–141.3  
18 Annotated Code of Maryland  
19 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Health – General**

23 15–141.3.

24 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2) "Certified violence prevention professional" means a prevention professional who meets the requirements of subsection (c) of this section.

(4) (i) "Community violence prevention services" means evidence-based, trauma-informed, supportive, and nonpsychotherapeutic services provided by a certified violence prevention professional, within or outside a clinical setting, for the purpose of promoting improved health outcomes and positive behavioral change, preventing injury recidivism, and reducing the likelihood that an individual who is the victim of community violence will commit or promote violence.

12 (ii) "Community violence prevention services" includes peer support  
13 and counseling, mentorship, conflict mediation, crisis intervention, targeted case  
14 management referrals to certified or licensed health care professionals or social services  
15 providers, patient education, and screening services to victims of violence.

20                           **(5) (6)**     “Interpersonal violence” means the intentional use of physical  
21 force or power against another individual by an individual or a small group of individuals

[6] (8) "Prevention professional" has the meaning provided by the National Uniform Claim Committee or its successor under Code Number 405300000X

31 (II) "TELEHEALTH" INCLUDES:

## 32                   1.     SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS INTERACTIONS;

## 33     AND

1                   **2. AN AUDIO-ONLY TELEPHONE CONVERSATION**  
2   BETWEEN A CERTIFIED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROFESSIONAL AND A PROGRAM  
3   RECIPIENT THAT RESULTS IN THE DELIVERY OF BILLABLE, COVERED COMMUNITY  
4   VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES.

5                   **(III) “TELEHEALTH” DOES NOT INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF**  
6   COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES SOLELY THROUGH:

7                   **1. AN E-MAIL MESSAGE; OR**  
8                   **2. A FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION.**

9                   (b) The Program [shall]:

10                  **(1) SHALL** provide community violence prevention services to Program  
11   recipients who have:

12                  **[(1)] (i) 1. Been exposed to community violence; or**  
13                  **[(ii)] 2. A personal history of injury sustained as a result of an act**  
14   **of community violence; and**

15                  **[(2)] (II) Been referred by a certified or licensed health care provider or**  
16   **social services provider to a certified violence prevention professional to receive community**  
17   **violence prevention services after the provider makes a determination that the Program**  
18   **recipient is at an elevated risk of violent injury or retaliation resulting from another act of**  
19   **community violence;**

20                  **(2) SHALL REIMBURSE FOR COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION**  
21   **SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER ITEM (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION THAT ARE PROVIDED IN**  
22   **PERSON, REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION AT WHICH THE SERVICES WERE**  
23   **PROVIDED;**

24                  **(3) SHALL:**

25                  **(I) PROVIDE COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES**  
26   **APPROPRIATELY DELIVERED THROUGH TELEHEALTH TO PROGRAM RECIPIENTS**  
27   **REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION OF THE PROGRAM RECIPIENT AT THE TIME**  
28   **TELEHEALTH SERVICES ARE PROVIDED; AND**

29                  **(II) ALLOW A DISTANT SITE PROVIDER TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY**  
30   **VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES TO A PROGRAM RECIPIENT FROM ANY LOCATION**  
31   **AT WHICH THE COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES MAY BE**  
32   **APPROPRIATELY DELIVERED THROUGH TELEHEALTH; AND**

10 (c) A prevention professional seeking certification as a certified violence  
11 prevention professional shall:

15 (2) Maintain the certification completed under item (1) of this subsection.

16 (d) [On or before January 1, 2023, the] **THE** Department shall approve at least  
17 [one accredited] **THREE** training and certification [program] **PROGRAMS** for certified  
18 violence prevention professionals, which shall include:

19 (1) At least 35 hours of initial training, addressing the following:

20 (i) The profound effects of trauma and violence and the basics of  
21 trauma-informed care;

(ii) Community violence prevention strategies, including conflict mediation and retaliation prevention related to community violence;

24 (iii) Case management and advocacy practices; and

25 (iv) Patient privacy and the federal Health Insurance Portability and  
26 Accountability Act of 1996; and

27 (2) At least 6 hours of continuing education every 2 years.

28 (e) An entity that employs or contracts with a certified violence prevention  
29 professional to provide community violence prevention services [shall]:

9 (f) This section may not be construed to alter the scope of practice for any health  
10 care professional.

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