



February 18, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – SB 441: Mental Health - Emergency Facilities List - Comprehensive Crisis Response Centers, Crisis Stabilization Centers, and Crisis Treatment Centers

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Honorable Members of the Committee

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS supports Senate Bill 441 (SB 441), which allows the Maryland Department of Health to expand the information given to police, sheriffs, judges, and the secret service by providing a list of crisis services that would hopefully divert individuals from preventable emergency room and inpatient admissions. Crisis services can also provide an alternative to incarceration while creating the opportunity to link individuals with needed community services.

Crisis stabilization centers, for example, offer a safe place for individuals who are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol to sober and receive short-term interventions, such as buprenorphine induction and medical screening and monitoring. More importantly, these individuals are also offered the opportunity to connect with ongoing behavioral health treatment, peer and recovery support services, and case management assistance."

Similarly, comprehensive crisis response centers (CCRC) noted as a resource in the bill provide 24/7, 365 days/year care for individuals who have behavioral health needs, whether mental health, substance use, or comorbid substance use disorder and mental illnesses. CCRC services also include: assessments, on-site crisis stabilization in a nonemergency department setting, linkages to services, outreach, and peer recovery support services. Services can be walk-in voluntary or emergency petition.



For these reasons, MPS respectfully asks the committee to move favorably on SB 441. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett, Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society