

SB624
Health – Mobile Response and Stabilization System
for Children and Families in Maryland – Study

Favorable

I strongly support SB 624.

I have a daughter, now 14, who has been diagnosed with Schizophrenia, Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder and Reactive Attachment Disorder. Trying to access crisis services for our family has been a nightmare.

I will give an example of the last time we needed crisis services, which was just last week. My daughter was being very aggressive and starting to have a breakdown, so I called 911. The police came, handcuffed her, and took her to Emergency Department of the local hospital. This hospital is where the police always take my daughter (or other children from our area) when they are called, but the hospital doesn't do children's mental health. We waited there for 16 hours while the ED staff tried to find a bed in a children's inpatient unit. They were unsuccessful, so they had an adult psychiatrist come down from the adult unit to sign off on her that she was ok to go home. They sent a packet of resources with us – all adult resources.

We have tried calling the mobile crisis team in our area, but usually they are not available to come out so we have to call 911 anyway. Even when mobile crisis has come out, they are not trained in dealing with children in crisis so they end up calling the police, who come out, put her in handcuffs, and take her to the emergency department of our local hospital, which as I said, doesn't do kids.

We have sat as long as four days in the emergency department waiting for an inpatient bed. This in itself is traumatic for my child. Sometimes other adults are there in the emergency department who are in a mental health crisis, which can be scary. Being handcuffed is also traumatic to my child.

I would love to have a mobile response team, trained in treating children, be able to come out to help to de-escalate the situation and prevent a trip to the emergency department or inpatient unit.

Please vote in favor of SB 624 so we can try to bring a mobile response system for kids to Maryland.

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