



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Health and Government Operations Committee

February 12, 2020

House Bill 332: Mental Health – Emergency Facilities List – Comprehensive Crisis Response Centers, Crisis Stabilization Centers, and Crisis Treatment Centers

POSITION: SUPPORT

Delegates Bagnal, Cullison, and Kipke, Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 332: Mental Health – Emergency Facilities List – Comprehensive Crisis Response Centers, Crisis Stabilization Centers, and Crisis Treatment Centers.

This legislation would provide that the list of emergency facilities the Maryland Department of Health is required to publish may include comprehensive crisis response centers, crisis stabilization centers, and crisis treatment centers; and generally relating to the list of emergency facilities published by the Maryland Department of Health.

MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland's land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland's 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

The 2018 Maryland Rural Health Plan (www.MDRuralHealthPlan.org), an extensive assessment of Maryland's rural health needs, cites repeatedly the importance and need for increased access to mental health and crisis response services across our 18 rural jurisdictions.

MHRA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

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