



Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc

PO Box 6675, MS 3230
1 Truman Parkway, Suite 101
Annapolis, MD 21401
Adrienne Mickler, CPA, MS
Executive Director

Web Site: www.aamentalhealth.org
Email: MHAAC@aol.com
Email: aac-lbha-connect@aacounty.org
Phone: 410-222-7858
Fax: 410-222-7881

Testimony:

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools-Preventive Measure Unit Pilot Program HB 535

The Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency is supportive of the overall goal of the bill. This bill is intended to be a prevention strategy for students experiencing behavior challenges that require Student Resource Officer and/or School Administration interventions.

Our Agency is aware of the increased number of calls by the school system to the Crisis Response System. The calls have become more frequent, the acuity is high and the ages of the youth continues to decrease. We are noting these behaviors at an earlier age than in the past.

This pilot seeks to help these youth who are identified by these behaviors early in their lives to prevent them from developing into a crisis situation. This pilot will provide interventions to these children that include access to treatment and possible diversion from the juvenile justice system. This pilot supports the child and the family to achieve successful outcomes for the child by identifying and removing barriers to treatment, engaging the child in treatment, and provide follow up for ongoing stabilization services.

The Anne Arundel County School System has been meeting with our agency to identify ways that we can support our youth in a coordinated way.

The Anne Arundel County Police Department has added specially trained Crisis Intervention Team Officers to assist our Crisis Response System.

In order for this Pilot Program to be successful, it needs to be fully funded. The Anne Arundel County Crisis System is already strained, having added responsibilities to help combat the devastating Opioid Crisis that has hit our county. The school system and the police have also expended considerable resources to address youth behavior. This is a laudable piece of legislation. However, to be successful it must be fully funded for all parties.

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The Crisis Response System will be losing grants that fund three mobile crisis teams at the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2020. The Mental Health Agency is requesting fiscal support for these teams from the State and Anne Arundel County. Those funds will be to maintain the current level of effort. Further demands on the Crisis System, the School System or the police cannot be achieved without additional funds.

Therefore, we request an amendment to fully fund the program for the mental health agency, the Anne Arundel County Police and the Anne Arundel County school system in support of this laudable piece of legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne J. Mickler, CPA, MS
Executive Director
Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency

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