



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 557 - Suicide Treatment Improvements Act – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information on Senate Bill (SB) 557 – Suicide Treatment Improvements Act.

SB 557 requires MDH to provide training for staff who assist callers on the Health Crisis Hotline to ensure staff are able to provide counseling for suicidal persons who may be in crisis. Additionally, SB 557 requires certain facilities to ensure that suicidal patients and patients who have attempted suicide are treated in a certain manner and also requires certain facilities to ensure that staff act in a certain manner and receive certain training.

Due to ongoing COVID-19 response efforts, MDH unfortunately does not have the fiscal or personnel resources to implement this bill if it is passed. Many of MDH's current personnel have already increased their workload and absorbed additional tasks that are critical to the COVID-19 response.

We recognize and value the importance of this bill and its impact on Marylanders. As such, we respectfully request this bill be held and reintroduced in the 2022 Session. We look forward to working with the bill sponsor(s) and appropriate stakeholders in the interim.

I hope this information is useful. If you have questions or need more information about this subject, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 260-3190 or webster.ye@maryland.gov or Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs Heather Shek at heather.shek@maryland.gov and the same number.

Sincerely,

Webster Ye
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy