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**SB 719 Maryland Department of Health - 2-1-1 Maryland - Mental Health Services  
Phone Call Program  
Favorable  
Senate Finance Committee  
March 3, 2021**

Good Afternoon Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations, encompassing almost 850,000 members. AARP MD overwhelmingly supports SB 719 Maryland Department of Health - 2-1-1 Maryland - Mental Health Services Phone Call Program. We thank Senator Zucker for sponsoring this important bill.

SB 719 requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to make recommendations to 2-1-1 Maryland regarding the establishment of an opt-in mental health services phone call program that (1) requires a call center to make periodic calls to persons who have opted into the program and (2) attempts to connect persons with a mental health provider upon request. The department's performance on this activity must be encompassed in the existing annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

AARP of Maryland has recently established an Advocacy Team on Brain and Behavioral Health Policy. The goal of the team is to support efforts to identify and address the needs of older adults (50 and over) who suffer from behavioral health disorders. We recognize that too often, mental health disorders and cognitive health issues among older adults are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed and there are little known about options. It is important for older adults to have access to services and the 211 service would be an added support service.

AARP believes that States should coordinate mental health services among all appropriate health, and aging-network services. The 2-1-1 Maryland as proposed with an opt-in mental health services phone call program will help seniors get the needed mental services they may need.

For these reasons, AARP MD respectfully ask the Finance Committee for a Favorable committee report. For questions or comments, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org), or at 410-302-8451. Thank you!

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