



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 442  
Suicide Treatment Improvements Act**

Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

**HB 442** proposes that the Maryland Department of Health provide training for employees who encounter someone who is suicidal or has attempted suicide previously. This includes suicide hotline counselors, mental health facility employees, and police officers who may respond to calls involving suicides. Certain employees are to receive training on how to counsel a suicidal person through trauma-informed care and maintain strict guidelines of care to avoid re-traumatization and any sort of mental, emotional, psychological, or physical abuse.

This past year was especially challenging for those struggling with mental illness. In June 2020, a national survey discovered that 40% of adults were struggling with mental health and substance abuse. It is responsible and prudent to invest in the wellbeing of residents living with mental illnesses.

**HB 442** is a step toward decreasing the amount of suicides in our state. One Marylander will take their own life every 13 hours. It attacks our young people; suicide is the third leading cause of death for people between the ages of 10-34.

It is not enough that we offer care but rather that we offer care that works. **HB442** seeks to offer care that is sensitive to issues of race, sex, gender identity, sexual identity, past trauma, addictions, and that is tailorable to the needs of the survivor. With this type of care, we can see results; a simple follow-up call has been shown to stop the respondent from harming themselves in almost 80% of cases.

For these reasons, I urge you to support **HB 442**, and I request a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young".

Delegate Karen Lewis Young