
HB 537
Letter of
Information

TO: The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
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Johns Hopkins wants to provide information regarding **House Bill 537 Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation - Procedures**. This bill would expand the providers allowed to transport emergency petition patients to beyond just peace officers. If this bill were to pass the providers that could transport patients would include physicians, psychologists, clinical social workers, licensed clinical professional counselors, clinical nurse specialists in psychiatric and mental health nursing, psychiatric nurse practitioners, licensed clinical marriage and family therapists, health officers or designees. Johns Hopkins understands that often peace officers are not the most appropriate response to someone in a psychiatric emergency.

The way behavioral health crises are managed needs to be carefully reevaluated and reconsidered across the country. That is why Maryland's Health Services Cost Review Commission last year awarded grants to hospitals across the state for the Regional Partnership Catalyst Grant for Behavioral Health Crisis Services. Johns Hopkins was awarded this grant, along with sixteen other hospitals, three local behavioral authorities and community organizations across Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County and Howard County as a part of the Greater Baltimore Regional Integrated Crisis System (GBRICS). GBRICS aims to address behavioral health crises through a robust crisis hotline and referral system and increased access to mobile crisis services, which helps to serve individuals in the community instead of through the criminal justice system or hospital emergency departments.

We are proud to be a member of GBRICS and believe it has the opportunity to truly make a difference to the behavioral health system in Maryland. Johns Hopkins wanted to make sure this Committee was aware of the work of GBRICS while considering **House Bill 537 Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Procedures**.