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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 1018 - Public Safety and Behavioral Health Improvement Act**

**SPONSOR TESTIMONY**

**Cross-file: SB 781**

**House Appropriations Committee, March 8, 2022**

**Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and Members of the Committee,**

Thank you for your consideration of **House Bill 1018**, which will require the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to take measures to include performance data and information in reports, and create quantifiable safety indicators. Additionally, the Governor will be required to appropriate \$500,000 to the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services was established to strengthen the Center of Excellence's crisis response team. However, the Center does not have adequate funding to function properly and provide resources to assist individuals with their mental and behavioral needs. To meet their six main goals, the Center of Excellence requests increased funding.

This bill will specifically require the Governor to include appropriations for \$500,000 in the annual budget for the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence.

Additionally, this bill:

- Requires the Governor's office of Crime and Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to take certain actions related to the inclusion of performance data reports and a scorecard of safety indicators
- Requires the Department of Health to adopt criteria for certifying peer support specialists
- Establishes a grant program which will provide funds to local jurisdictions to create and expand behavioral health screening programs
- Requires the Maryland 9-1-1 board to establish training on behavioral health conditions and crisis intervention for their public safety answering personnel

By better providing adequate resources to the Center of Excellence, we can help them meet their goals of providing for individuals with mental and behavioral needs.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on **House Bill 1018**.