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Budget and Taxation Committee

Health and Human Services  
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Fair Practices and  
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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

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Testimony for Senate Bill 994  
Public Health – Mental Health Advance Directives – Awareness and Statewide Database  
Finance Committee  
March 22, 2022

Madame Chair Kelley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present **Senate Bill 994 – Public Health – Mental Health Advance Directives – Awareness and Statewide Database**

Mental health has become increasingly important with the rise of fatal suicides and increase in diagnoses within the state of Maryland. This bill aims to help this crisis by establishing and promoting a statewide database of Mental Health Advance Directives for citizens of Maryland to access.

Senate Bill 994 would require the Maryland Department of Health to implement and develop a public awareness campaign to encourage the use of Mental Health Advance Directives in the state. This is necessary in order to effectively promote the new initiatives that have been established to aid in the current mental health crisis. This campaign will include awareness initiatives to encourage and support outreach efforts by personal and governmental agencies including mental healthcare providers, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and more.

This bill will greatly benefit all citizens of Maryland in need of mental healthcare and support. Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 994.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Addie C. Eckardt".

Senator Addie C. Eckardt