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GOVERNOR'S COORDINATING OFFICES

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March 8, 2022

Chair Maggie McIntosh
House Appropriations Committee
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Delores G. Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 1018/SB 781: Public Safety and Behavioral Health Improvement Act

POSITION: Information

Dear Chairs and Members of the Respective Committees,

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services ("Office") is providing this letter of information for House Bill 1018/Senate Bill 781: Public Safety and Behavioral Health Improvement Act.

This is a piece of omnibus legislation that requires the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to take certain actions related to the inclusion of performance data and information in reports; the creation of a scorecard of quantifiable safety indicators; and requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$500,000 for the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence beginning in FY 2024. The funding will assist with contracts for the purposes of carrying out its mission and establishing a behavioral health screening grant program within the Department of Health. With the \$500,000 in the annual appropriation, part of this funding should be a \$75,000 salary for a FTE position, with benefits, startup, etc, to be added, to manage the contracts that the Center of Excellence negotiates; to facilitate data collection from all counties in the state; and support local or regional planning workshops.

The behavioral health screening grant program in the Department of Health would be used to provide funds to local jurisdictions to establish and expand behavioral health screening pilot programs. The Department, in coordination with the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence within the Office, shall administer the program. These behavioral health initiatives tie into the work of the Center of Excellence, which was established by SB 857. This Center has a multitude of purposes

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including: act as the statewide information repository for behavioral health treatment and diversion programs related to the criminal justice system; and lead the development of a strategic plan to increase treatment and reduce the detention of individuals with behavioral health disorders involved in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, SB 857 already statutorily charges the Center to coordinate with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Behavioral Health Administration to implement and track the progress of creating an effective behavioral health system of care in the State relating to individuals involved in the criminal justice system. To implement this, one of the positions within the Center of Excellence is a Law Enforcement Coordinator, which works to include a statewide model for community crisis intervention services and provide technical support to local governments, law enforcement, public safety agencies, behavioral health agencies, and crisis service providers as it relates to a crisis intervention model program.

With regards to the provision surrounding certain actions related to the inclusion of performance data and information in reports and the creation of a scorecard of quantifiable safety indicators, the Office advised that there is a need for a data analyst at approximately \$60,000 a year to collect the necessary data and a consultant to develop the required scorecard. In the current contract with the scorecard consultant that the Office uses for other purposes, there is a license fee to host the scorecard plus the consultant's hourly rate to build the scorecard. The consultant charges \$40/month to host the scorecards our agency currently uses for Local Management Boards, of which there are 24 scorecards for that use. For those scorecards, it will cost an estimated 230 hours to build at an hourly rate of \$75. Similar rates may apply to the building of scorecards related to this legislation.

As such, the Office continues to work with stakeholders to coordinate the efforts of implementing the tasks required of the Center of Excellence to increase public safety and provide support services to those involved in the criminal justice system, as this bill currently addresses.

Sincerely,



Yesim K. Karaman
Chief of Staff
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services