



**CARE BRAVELY**

HB1329 – Suicide Treatment Improvements Act  
House Health and Government Operations Committee – March 7, 2022  
Testimony of Martha D. Nathanson, Esq., Vice President, Government Relations and  
Community Development  
Position: SUPPORT

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I am writing in SUPPORT of HB1329 - Suicide Treatment Improvements Act. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County; and; Grace Medical Center in Baltimore (formerly Bon Secours Hospital).

HB1329 creates additional requirements for systems that interact with persons experiencing suicidal ideations and may be in crisis. It requires specific training for crisis hotline staff and police officers, updates to state psychiatric facilities, and prohibits insurance providers from charging for counseling and assessing suicidal individuals.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals and other providers and practitioners have all experienced increased calls and visits for behavioral health crises, including signs of increased risk for suicide across all demographics. Calls to hotlines, Emergency Room visits and attempts to seek individual counseling services have increased. Often, individual counseling services are not available in a reasonable time, resulting in Emergency Room visits and inpatient admissions.

HB1329 sets forth standards that will enhance access to services for individuals in crisis and increase the likelihood that these individuals will not complete their suicide attempts and will receive treatment needed to prevent such attempts. Additional training for the crisis hotline staff and police officers who may have the first contact with these individuals and reducing the costs of care can remove barriers to care and save lives.

For the above stated reason, we request a FAVORABLE report for HB1329.

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