



March 3, 2022

Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 1329: Suicide Treatment Improvement Act

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates's Health and Government Operations Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1400 plus members fully support HB 1329, Suicide Treatment Improvement Act.

We support any bill that improves funding and supports for families, people with a variety of disabilities, service veterans and non-veterans alike. Too often the health care system lets down our citizens, who suffer with a variety of maladies, for a variety of reasons. Covid 19 has made things even harder on citizens that struggle with depression. The current level of care for folks who consider or attempt suicide can no longer be the standard of care for our ailing citizens. We can and must do better.

I am quite positive that any parent, health care advocate, or pro veteran stakeholder will have an interest in seeing that legislation is being crafted to help support all of Maryland's citizens tackle the daunting issues around mental health, health care and mental health support services.

Too often teens, people with disabilities, veterans struggle and average citizens just try to hold it together on a daily basis, find themselves self-medicating through the use of drugs or alcohol, and then make awful, dangerous decisions to attempt suicide. We have to offer other solutions to them.

For Our Veterans:

According to the USO, more than 30,177 active and former service members have died by suicide since 9/11. These numbers are tragic and staggering to consider. Don't we owe them more?

<https://www.uso.org/stories/2664-military-suicide-rates-are-at-an-all-time-high-heres-how-were-trying-to-help>

<https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/94358/2021-national-veteran-suicide-prevention-annual-report-shows-decrease-in-veteran-suicides/>



For today's Youth:

According to the most recent Youth Risk Behaviors Survey from 2019, **8.9 percent of youth in grades 9-12 reported that they had made at least one suicide attempt in the past 12 months**. Female students attempted almost twice as often as male students (11% vs. 6.6%).

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

- Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death for ages 10-24. (CDC WISQARS)
- Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death for college-age youth and ages 12-18. (CDC WISQARS)
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease, **COMBINED**.
- Each day in our nation, there are an average of over 3,703 attempts by young people grades 9-12. If these percentages are additionally applied to grades 7 & 8, the numbers would be higher.

We thank the Delegate for bringing forward such a positive and transformative piece of legislation. It truly will have a positive impact on all of our citizens by improving access to quality health care and mental health support services. We also applaud the limits placed on restraint and seclusion of patients seeking treatment for issues related to mental health contained in this bill.

We ask that the committees please return a favorable report, and support HB 1329. Thank you all for your time and consideration of our testimony.

Respectfully,

Mr. Richard Ceruolo | Director of Public Policy | richceruolo@gmail.com

Parent Advocacy Consortium (Find us on Facebook/Meta) |

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>