



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Lorig Charkoudian

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: January 26, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 129 – *Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services and Public Safety Answering Points – Modifications*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, and the Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 129.

The development of a comprehensive crisis response system has been a priority of this General Assembly and a broad range of stakeholders, including the members of the above-referenced organizations. The provisions of House Bill 129 will enhance the State's efforts to address the need for timely and appropriate crisis response with a specific focus on minimizing law enforcement interaction with individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The bill requires proposals requesting Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program funding to contain response standards that minimize law enforcement interaction for individuals in crisis; amends the definition of crisis team to include prioritizing limiting interaction with law enforcement; and requires public safety answering points (911) to develop written protocols for calls involving an individual suffering an active behavioral health crisis.

Passage of House Bill 129 will further align Maryland's crisis response framework with nationally recognized best practices. The development of written protocols by public safety answering points will ensure that Maryland's crisis response system integrates the services of law enforcement and crisis teams to ensure that individuals receive the response that is appropriate to address their behavioral health crisis.

For more information call:

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