



## Senate Bill 12

### *Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services and Public Safety Answering Points – Modifications*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations  
and Judiciary Committees

Date: March 30, 2022

From: D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 12. This bill would, among other provisions, revise the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program to require proposals detailing how law enforcement interaction with individuals in crisis will be minimized.

At present, several Maryland counties involve law enforcement in crisis response situations. Often, law enforcement units are the only entities available to respond to individuals suffering from an active mental health crisis, especially after business hours. Additional situations arise wherein behavioral health crisis response units request law enforcement backup to ensure a crisis worker's safety. In the direst circumstances, an individual suffering from an active mental health crisis may pose a clear and imminent threat to the public, necessitating law enforcement involvement.

Understanding how law enforcement is sometimes needed to respond to situations concerning individuals suffering from an active mental health crisis, MACo worked with the bill sponsor to amend SB 12. The amended bill ensures counties with limited resources can preserve their current crisis response in applying for grants, while shifting toward a more holistic approach long-term.

SB 12, as amended by the Maryland Senate, maintains that counties are capable of protecting our shared constituents who may be suffering from a mental health crisis. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 12.