



JAN H. GARDNER

**Frederick County
Executive**

HB 1017

**Frederick County – Mental
Health Law – Assisted
Outpatient Treatment Pilot
Program**

County Position: SUPPORT

Date: March 9, 2022

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner urges your **SUPPORT** for House Bill 1017 – Frederick County – Mental Health Law – Assisted Outpatient Treatment Pilot Program.

An accessible, responsive, culturally sensitive, 24/7 system of behavioral health care is critical to the well-being of individuals as well as our entire community. A comprehensive continuum of care that provides resources and services, via a robust combination of traditional and non-traditional means, is necessary to prevent individuals from falling through gaps. Such a system requires an intentional and collaborative effort by all sectors.

County Executive Gardner supports the provisions in the proposed legislation that:

- Establishes an Assisted Outpatient Treatment Pilot Program in Frederick County through legislation that will provide care for those individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who may lack the ability to direct and manage their care;
- Leverages the programming and the robust integrated system of behavioral health care currently in place in Frederick County, which is award-winning and has been nationally recognized for its innovation;
- Provides strong safeguards for respondents' rights with the requirement for representation by counsel at all stages, testimonial evidence by a psychiatrist, and specific criteria for "clear and convincing evidence" that a respondent should receive assisted outpatient treatment (AOT);
- Ensures accountability with the requirement of an annual report that will include the number of individuals receiving AOT, the percentage of individuals who adhered to their treatment plans, and a cost savings analysis with regard to the funds saved by individuals receiving treatment under the pilot program; and
- Creates a model that may be replicated and scaled to help to close gaps in the behavioral health care system for those individuals who have not found success in traditional voluntary and intensive services.

Frederick County Executive Gardner urges **SUPPORT** for House Bill 1017.