February 16, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 446 – Public Safety - Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities - Peer Support Programs – Letter of Information with Amendments

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information with amendments on Senate Bill (SB) 446 – Public Safety - Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities - Peer Support Programs. SB 446 requires the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) within MDH to issue a report on certain best practices relating to peer support counseling for fire, rescue, or emergency medical services entities.

The report required under SB 446 would be better suited for the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), rather than BHA. MIEMSS oversees and coordinates all components of the statewide emergency medical services (EMS) system. Among its many duties, MIEMSS provides leadership and medical direction, conducts and supports EMS educational programs and participates in EMS-related public education and prevention programs.

MIEMSS staff are the experts in best practices relating to peer support counseling that will support fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. For these reasons, MDH respectfully requests an amendment that changes the administration responsible for the report from BHA to MIEMSS. MDH coordinated with MIEMSS on this amendment and MIEMSS supports this change.

If you have any questions, please contact Heather Shek, Director of Governmental Affairs, at heather.shek@maryland.gov or (443) 695-4218.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary

On page 3, in line 7 and 8, strike "**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**" and substitute "<u>**MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEMS**</u>".