



March 6, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
House Health & Government Operations Committee
Room 241 - House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – House Bill 1176: Voluntary 9-1-1 Registry for Individuals Needing Special Assistance

Dear Chairman Peña-Melnyk and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 1176: Voluntary 9-1-1 Registry for Individuals Needing Special Assistance (HB 1176), as these 911 registry programs are designed to help individuals who may need special assistance during an emergency. These programs are intended to provide emergency responders with critical information about individuals who have special needs or disabilities.

The programs work by allowing individuals or their caregivers to register with their local emergency services agency, typically the 911 center. During the registration process, individuals provide information about their disability or special need, as well as any other relevant information, such as medications or medical equipment they may require. This information is then entered into a database that is accessible to emergency responders when a 911 call is made from the registered individual's residence. When emergency services are dispatched to the registered address, responders will be alerted that the individual may need special assistance, allowing them to provide the appropriate level of care.

911 registry programs can be particularly useful for individuals who may have difficulty communicating or who may require specialized medical equipment or assistance during an emergency. By providing emergency responders with critical information in advance, individuals with special needs can receive faster and more effective care during a crisis.



As such, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on HB 1176. If you have any questions concerning this testimony, don't hesitate to get in touch with Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee