



**House Health & Government Operations Committee
March 27, 2024**

**Senate Bill 974 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services –
9-8-8 Trust Fund Fees**

Support

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-MD strongly supports SB 974. This bill establishes a permanent funding source for the 988 Trust Fund to sustain and strengthen 988 mental health helpline services in Maryland.

The General Assembly created the 988 Trust Fund in 2022 to provide dedicated funding for this system, but no permanent funding source was established. Federal grants and state general funds have supported the program so far. We now need a permanent funding source to ensure the services can continue.

SB 974 would create a 25 cents per month per line telecom fee modeled after Maryland's current 911 funding structure. This small fee would generate \$15-20 million annually to support current 988 operations, investments in new technology, and targeted service expansions. This will enable Marylanders to access 988 for lifesaving counseling and support when they need it.

We ask for a favorable report on SB 974.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.