

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



February 10, 2025

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The Honorable Ben Barns
Chair, Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support House Bill 1049: Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding.

Dear Chairman Barns 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 1100 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) supports House Bill 1049, Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding. This bill would provide continuing funding for the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program for the 2027 to 2029 fiscal years. Community-based crisis response services provide vital services to those who are experiencing mental health crises. The benefits of these services include rapid and coordinated response to mental health emergencies and the ability to connect individuals in crisis with appropriate support services in local communities. Crisis response services help reduce mental health stigma, prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, and improve safety in the community.

By continuing to fund the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program, Marylanders can continue to access these critical services. For these reasons, MPS supports HB1049. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact MPS lobbyist, Lisa Harris Jones at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com.

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