

March 4, 2025

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maryland respectfully requests amendments to the proposed FY2026 budget for the Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration (BHA).

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

We respectfully request a favorable report on HB1049 to secure crisis response programs continue to deliver lifesaving services at the local level throughout the state. The Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program was established by the General Assembly in 2019 to fund behavioral health crisis services and has been funded at \$5 million per year for the last four years. It was unclear in the governor's proposed budget if this funding would continue at all, but subsequent budget analysis shows that there will be \$5 million allocated for FY26. Cutting the grant program would have made it impossible for mobile crisis teams, walk-in clinics, and school based crisis services to continue at their current levels and, in many cases, they would cease to function. NAMI Maryland is grateful for the \$5 million allocation in the proposed BHA budget but we ask that those programs continue with at least level funding through 2029.

People living with mental health conditions, their families, and communities across Maryland rely on crisis response programs and services. Please advance HB1049 with a favorable report.

Kathryn S. Farinholt  
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