



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, Dr.PH, Acting Secretary

March 6, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 East Miller Office Building
Senate Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Senate Bill 599 - Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding
Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill 599 - Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding.

This bill seeks to require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation to the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program of \$5,000,000 for fiscal years 2027 through 2029.

Consistent with the 2025 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Guidelines for a Behavioral Health Coordinated System of Care, the Department's goal is to build a comprehensive continuum of crisis services to ensure that every Marylander has someone to call, someone to respond, and a safe place to go when they experience a behavioral health crisis.¹ Crisis services reduce the utilization of emergency departments and hospital inpatient care for behavioral health crises and provide an alternative to criminal justice engagement. The Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program began in fiscal year 2020 and has provided annual funding to ten jurisdictions for critical mobile crisis response and stabilization services, urgent care walk-in services, and crisis beds. In fiscal year 2024, 9,500 individuals received services through the grant program.

Over the last year, the Department has built upon this grant program by issuing final regulations that set statewide standards for Mobile Crisis Team services ([10.63.03.20](#)) and established Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Centers ([10.63.03.21](#)), effective May 27, 2024. For the first time, federal Medicaid funding will be leveraged for these two services, which will support long-term sustainability. As of February 2025, five Mobile Crisis Team providers across 16 jurisdictions are licensed by the Behavioral Health Administration and enrolled in Medicaid.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: Model Definitions for Behavioral Health Emergency, Crisis, and Crisis-Related Services. HHS Publication No. SMA XX-xxxx [or PEPXX-XX-XXXXX]: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2025.
<https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/national-guidelines-crisis-care-pep24-01-037.pdf>

Additionally, the Department has been improving data collection efforts to improve the evaluation of the crisis response system.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan B. Moran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ryan B. Moran, Dr.P.H, MHSA
Acting Secretary