

March 6, 2025

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the Budget and Tax Committee,

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 SB599 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 SB599 with a favorable report.

Kathryn S. Farinholt
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