



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 310 – Education – Youth Suicide Prevention School Program – Revisions – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) is submitting this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 310 – Education – Youth Suicide Prevention School Program – Revisions.

SB 310 proposes critical updates to the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program by incorporating education on the connection between gambling addiction and youth suicide. This legislation represents a significant enhancement to existing mental health education efforts, addressing an emerging risk factor that contributes to youth mental health crises. By expanding the program to include awareness of gambling addiction, SB 310 ensures that students, families, and educators are better equipped to identify and respond to warning signs, fostering a comprehensive approach to youth suicide prevention.

This bill supports the Department’s mission to protect and improve the health and well-being of Maryland residents. It aligns with our efforts to mitigate behavioral health risks through early intervention, education, and increased access to resources. By focusing on an often-overlooked factor such as gambling addiction, SB 310 strengthens prevention initiatives and promotes equity in mental health education across Maryland schools.

The Department applauds the forward-thinking approach of SB 310 and its potential to reduce youth suicide rates through targeted education and outreach. We are committed to supporting its successful implementation and ensuring that schools, educators, and mental health professionals have the resources needed to effectively integrate this expanded program.

While this bill provides essential updates to improve youth mental health outcomes, it is important to note the potential fiscal impact on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for program implementation, particularly in training educators and staff. Adequate

funding and support will be critical to ensure that the training needs of school personnel are met without overburdening existing resources.

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 or 443-826-1851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LH Scott", is positioned above the typed name.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary