



March 25, 2026

**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

HB 1485 - Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tierra's Law)

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as "behavioral health") annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports HB 1485 - Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tierra's Law). This legislation would set new basic standards for resources that must be provided to families in the event of a loved one's overdose or other behavioral health crisis.

Thousands of overdoses and behavioral health crises happen every year in Maryland. Baltimore City experiences the highest number of these events, but they are common statewide. Each one of these events represents a potentially traumatic experience and source of grief. BHSB works diligently to educate the public about the 988 helpline throughout the Central Maryland region, including as a resource for grief, but there is no standardized protocol to support families who have experienced a loss due to a behavioral health crisis.

HB 1485 would direct the Chief Medical Examiner and other health providers to inform families of 988 and other crisis resources. 988 counselors have considerable training and experience in supporting the family members of those struggling with behavioral health challenges and for individuals experiencing loss. Creating a standard pamphlet that can be handed out when a family is notified of a crisis would improve the support available to families. HB 1485 would also improve training in how local personnel should interact with families who have experienced loss. These modest steps would not cost the state anything but would help these families who are struggling to access the resources they need.

Maryland has resources to help grieving families and they should be made accessible. **We urge the Senate Finance Committee to support HB 1485.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142