



**2026 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 1012 – Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams - Authorization
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Letter of Support As Amended
BILL ANALYSIS: HB 1012 authorizes a county or municipality to establish a local suicide fatality review team, requires the team to coordinate with a local child fatality review team, establishes memberships requirements and protections for the appropriate use of data and information by the teams, among other requirements.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) submits this letter in strong support of HB 1012 as amended. The proposed bill provides a critical opportunity to strengthen suicide prevention efforts across Maryland by allowing local jurisdictions to establish multidisciplinary suicide fatality review teams. These teams would examine individual suicide deaths in a protected, confidential setting to identify contributing factors, system gaps, and opportunities for prevention. The bill does not mandate these teams but if a jurisdiction is interested, and Frederick and several others are, they *may* establish these teams for their communities.

HB 1012 follows the successful model established in 2014 for Local Overdose Fatality Review Teams and, as amended, requires coordination with local child fatality review teams. That legislation recognized the importance of creating a confidential, structured process that permits the sharing of otherwise protected health information for the sole purpose of prevention. These review teams have been a critical tool for overdose response that have helped local jurisdictions identify opportunities for system-level changes. Authorizing local suicide fatality review teams would apply this same proven framework to another urgent public health crisis. It would ensure appropriate confidentiality protections while enabling responsible data and information sharing and multidisciplinary collaboration.

Maryland has taken important steps related to the review of suicide fatalities with the establishment of the state level Suicide Fatality Review Team. That team reviews aggregated statewide data to inform statewide approaches to suicide prevention. While aggregate data provide valuable context, they are not sufficient to uncover the nuanced, case-specific factors that often reveal missed opportunities for intervention. A local fatality review framework would allow local multidisciplinary teams, including public health, behavioral health, health care providers, law enforcement, schools, and community partners, to review individual cases in a legally protected environment. This deeper analysis is essential to understanding root causes and strengthening prevention strategies at the jurisdiction level.

Suicide is a complex and multifaceted public health challenge. Empowering local communities to conduct suicide fatality reviews reflects a strong commitment to saving lives and improving the systems that serve Maryland residents.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this Letter of Support As Amended for HB 1012. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at рмаiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*
