



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

March 10, 2026

Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 870 — Maryland Department of Health – Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Beds – Capacity in Prince George's County

POSITION: Favorable

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Prince George's County Council, we respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 870, which would require the Maryland Department of Health to ensure the establishment and ongoing operation of a minimum number of licensed adolescent psychiatric inpatient beds in Prince George's County and to evaluate options for expanding capacity when needed. Currently, Prince George's County has zero adolescent psychiatric inpatient beds.

Prince George's County is home to one of the largest youth populations in the State, yet families continue to face significant challenges accessing timely inpatient behavioral health services for adolescents experiencing acute mental health crises. Limited bed availability often results in extended emergency department boarding, delayed treatment, and families being forced to seek care outside of their home jurisdiction. Expanding local inpatient capacity is essential to ensuring that youth receive appropriate, timely care in the least disruptive setting possible.

Senate Bill 870 addresses a critical gap in Maryland's behavioral health infrastructure by prioritizing geographic equity in access to inpatient psychiatric services. Ensuring sufficient adolescent bed capacity within Prince George's County will help reduce strain on emergency departments, improve continuity of care, and support better outcomes for youth and families. Increased local capacity also enhances coordination with community-based providers, schools, and family support systems, which are all vital components of effective behavioral health treatment.

From a local government perspective, improving access to adolescent behavioral health services can also reduce downstream impacts on public safety systems, school systems, and social services. When youth are unable to access appropriate care in a timely manner, local systems often absorb the consequences through increased crisis response demands and service utilization.

Senate Bill 870 represents an important step toward strengthening Maryland's behavioral health continuum and ensuring that Prince George's County residents have equitable access to needed services. The Prince George's County Council supports efforts to expand behavioral health capacity and improve outcomes for young people experiencing mental health crises.

For these reasons, the Prince George's County Council respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 870.

Prepared by: Ashlar Government Relations on behalf of Prince George's County Council

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