



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

**March 24, 2026**

**House Bill 1012**

**Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams - Authorization  
Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 1012** authorizes county or municipality to establish a local suicide fatality review team; requiring a local team to coordinate with certain local child fatality review teams and the State Suicide Fatality Review Committee; exempting certain meetings of a local team from the Open Meetings Act; providing certain immunity for certain actions taken by a person as a member of a local team; authorizing a local team to request and receive certain information under certain authority; establishing that a local team is a public health authority conducting certain activities in accordance with a certain federal law; providing that certain information acquired by a local team is confidential and exempt from disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act, discovery, or introduction as evidence in any proceeding; prohibiting certain persons from testifying in any proceeding about details of a local team meeting; and generally relating to local suicide fatality review teams.

The purpose of a local suicide fatality review team is to prevent suicide deaths by:

1. Reviewing suicide deaths that occur within the county;
2. Identifying systemic, service, and policy factors associated with suicide risk;
3. Promoting coordination among entities involved in prevention, crisis response, treatment, and postvention; and
4. Developing actionable recommendations to reduce future suicides.

Catholic hospitals serve as integral members of communities across Maryland and care for a significant portion of Marylanders. Their clinical expertise, data collection, and deep community engagement uniquely position them to contribute meaningful insight to the work of local

fatality review teams. Their participation can strengthen analysis of risk factors, service gaps, and opportunities for improved coordination of care.

As neighboring states continue to expand access to physician-assisted suicide, it is especially important for Maryland to reaffirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Public policy should clearly communicate that individuals experiencing suffering, disability, or mental health challenges are not burdens, but valued members of our communities. Every life matters. In 2022, suicide was the 11th leading cause of death for all ages in the United States. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10–14 and 20–34, and the third leading cause for people ages 15–19.<sup>1</sup>

In response to this crisis, Pope Leo XIV has urged communities to ensure that those who are struggling “always find a community that welcomes them, listens to them and accompanies them,” offering comfort, support, and necessary professional help.<sup>2</sup> Establishing and strengthening local suicide fatality review teams is an important step toward building that kind of responsive, compassionate community—one that not only studies loss, but actively works to prevent it.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 1012**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db509.htm#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20suicide%20was%20the,the%20National%20Vital%20Statistics%20System.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/news-commentary/popese-prayer-intention-is-for-those-struggling-with-suicidal-thoughts/>