

## THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

*Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect.*

*We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.*



CPMC  
COALITION TO PROTECT  
MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

### **SB0738 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage - Mobile Crisis and Crisis Stabilization Senate Finance Committee**

#### **Position: SUPPORT**

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. **CPMC urges a favorable report on SB0738 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage - Mobile Crisis and Crisis Stabilization.**

Our coalition is in support of any expansion plans to provide sufficient mobile response and stabilization services across all of Maryland's jurisdictions. Our state has been in the midst of a foster care placement crisis, which has had decades of challenges with no sustainable solutions. Each year, children and youth with complex and high intensity behavioral health and/or developmental or medical complexity are left in limbo with nowhere to go, relying on long-term hospital and emergency room stays after discharge.

Access to mobile crisis and stabilization can help struggling families with children and youth with behavioral health issues avoid foster care. Directly providing the care at their homes reduces the number of out-of-home placements by providing access to emergency behavioral health professionals to respond to crisis situations and connect families to community resources to maintain stabilization efforts. This appears to be a crucial element in New Jersey's "system of care," which has moved from being one of the worst systems of care for children to one of the best and has sustained in recent years the lowest rate of children removed from their homes and placed in foster care in our nation. Providing these services directly to children and youth in their homes reduces instances in which families would otherwise rely upon emergency rooms and possible hospitalizations, which risk becoming out-of-home unlicensed settings if families feel they have no continuing support to keep children and youth with complex needs in their homes.

In New Jersey, the use of the mobile crisis and stabilization units is now an automatic response whenever a youth is placed in foster care. The trauma trained professionals respond immediately to provide counseling and support to both the child and foster caregivers, following up with the youth and foster family every week for a maximum of eight weeks. With this additional support directly provided at the foster care home, data has shown an over 90% success rate in keeping the youth stable and healthy in their placements. Both the youth and caregivers get the support they need, which has

*The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children*

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resulted in fewer placement failures, instances of pediatric overstays, and the need for seeking further placements.

It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report on SB0738 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage - Mobile Crisis and Crisis Stabilization.**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – The American Academy of Pediatrics - MD Chapter; Center for Hope; Child Justice; Court Appointed Special Advocates (Baltimore County); Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY); Brigit VanGraafeiland