

HB 1485_Tiarra Law_Crossover_BHSB_FAVORABLE .pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



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

HB1485_ HeatherBagnallTestimony

Uploaded by: Delegate Bagnall

Position: FAV

HEATHER BAGNALL
Legislative District 33
Anne Arundel County

Health and Government Operations
Committee



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 160
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3406 · 301-858-3406
800-492-7122 Ext. 3406
Heather.Bagnall@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 25, 2026

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

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee thank you for the consideration of House Bill 1485, and thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony in favor of House Bill 1485.

The bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop a standardized, accessible resource pamphlet outlining State and national crisis services, including the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and other behavioral and mental health supports and programs.

In specified circumstances, and upon request or when reasonably appropriate in connection with a death, overdose, or behavioral health crisis response, relevant information shall be shared with family members. This requirement applies regardless of whether the initial point of contact is an emergency medical technician in a home setting, hospital staff, or personnel from the medical examiner's office.

This ensures consistency across settings. It ensures that wherever a Marylander encounters the system in one of life's most devastating moments, they receive clear direction.

No Maryland family should experience the gravity of a behavioral health crisis or overdose death – whether at home, in a hospital, or at the medical examiner's office – and be left without a clear pathway to support. And just as importantly, no interaction with our healthcare system or with government employees should compound the trauma they are already carrying. House Bill 1485 is about meeting families in that reality.

The bill also directs the Department to review trauma-informed care training for relevant healthcare professionals and report back to the General Assembly. Because emergency response is

about more than intervention. It is about how we communicate in the aftermath. The tone we use. The clarity we provide. The recognition that families are absorbing shock, not just information.

Maryland has invested in crisis infrastructure with 9-8-8, mobile crisis teams, and statewide behavioral health services. But resources only matter if they are placed directly into the hands of families, in a form they can return to later when the fog begins to lift and the questions finally surface.

This legislation does not create a new bureaucracy. It does something both modest and deeply humane. It ensures that individuals facing the loss of a loved one to overdose or a health crisis are treated with dignity and receive meaningful information to help them in the immediate aftermath.

Families are already traumatized by these deaths. We have a responsibility to ensure that no healthcare provider or government employee adds to that trauma through inconsistency, bias, silence, or a lack of direction. I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

HB1485 - Senate_FAV_MedChi_PH - Crisis Res. Sys. -

Uploaded by: Drew Vetter

Position: FAV



The Maryland State Medical Society
1211 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516
410.539.0872
Fax: 410.547.0915
1.800.492.1056
www.medchi.org

House Health Committee
March 3, 2026

House Bill 1485 – *Public Health – Crisis Response System – Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)*

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** *House Bill 1485: Public Health – Crisis Response System – Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)*.

By requiring the development and distribution of a standardized crisis resource pamphlet, House Bill 1485 promotes consistent communication and improves access to critical support systems when they are needed most. This bill strengthens Maryland's crisis response system by ensuring that patients and families receive clear information about available behavioral health resources, including the 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and by evaluating trauma-informed care training for health care providers.

The bill's focus on reviewing and strengthening trauma-informed care training is equally important. Trauma-informed approaches improve patient trust, reduce stigma, and enhance outcomes, particularly for individuals affected by behavioral health emergencies. Ensuring that providers are equipped with best practices in trauma-informed engagement supports both patient safety and quality of care.

House Bill 1485 was introduced in response to the tragic death of Tiarra, a young Marylander whose family reported significant gaps in communication, follow-up support, and access to crisis resources after her behavioral health emergency. Her family's experience highlighted how, in the aftermath of a crisis or sudden death, loved ones are often left without clear guidance about available services. The bill reflects lessons learned from that tragedy and seeks to ensure that no family navigating a similar crisis is left without timely information and connection to resources.

For these reasons, MedChi requests a favorable report on House Bill 1485.

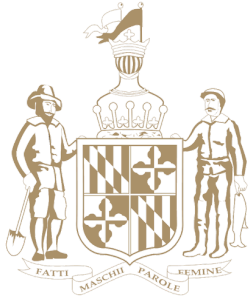
For more information call:

Andrew G. Vetter
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000

FIN-HB1485 - MOOR - LOS.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Keller

Position: FAV



Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Overdose Response

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 1485 – Public Health – Crisis Response System – Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)

Dear Chair Beidle,

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) HB 1485 – Public Health – Crisis Response System – Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law).

HB 1485 requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to develop a pamphlet outlining state and national crisis support resources and to conduct a review of trauma-informed care training. The bill mandates that, under certain circumstances, specified health care providers and representatives of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner are required to provide this pamphlet to an individual upon request or when there is a reasonable connection to a death, overdose, or a behavioral health crisis response.

MOOR supports the intent of this bill to provide vital information about Maryland's Crisis Response System to individuals impacted by death, overdose, or a behavioral health crisis. The pamphlet would provide information about the State and National 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and behavioral health programs and resources provided by the state via the Crisis Response Program.

Bereavement is associated with increased risk for adverse physical and behavioral health outcomes.¹ People mourning the loss of a loved one to an overdose are vulnerable and need support, and information about the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and state resources for supportive counseling

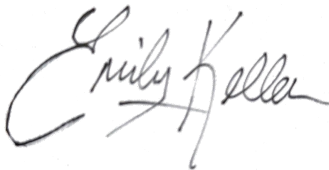
¹ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4119479/>

provide an opportunity for people to get the help they need. Pamphlets and printed materials are cost-effective tools for health communication and offer people the opportunity to look back at critical information when they need it.² This information can assist individuals in identifying resources to help them heal from the trauma of losing a loved one to an overdose. People who recently experienced an overdose will also benefit from receiving the pamphlet, as the Crisis Response System offers resources to help with linkages to care.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Benjamin Fraifeld, Associate Director for Policy & Advocacy at MOOR, 443-346-3013.

Sincerely,

Emily Keller
Special Secretary of Overdose Response

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Keller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Emily Keller
Special Secretary of Overdose Response

²https://ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/OP-25-00739?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%20pubmed

NCADD-MD - 2026 HB 1485 FAV - Tiarra's Law - Senat

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: FAV



**Senate Finance Committee
March 25, 2026**

**House Bill 1485 - Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for
Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training-
Tierra's Law**

Support

NCADD-Maryland strongly supports House Bill 1485. People need to be connected to support during traumatic and vulnerable moments, including after the death, overdose, or behavioral health crisis of a loved one. When this trauma goes unsupported, it deepens isolation and increases chaotic self-medication as people attempt to cope. Bereavement is associated with increased risk for adverse physical and behavioral health outcomes.

Information about the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and state resources for supportive counseling can provide an opportunity for people to get the help they need. Few resources are readily accessible now in the aftermath of an overdose. Families must often navigate grief, trauma, and massive disruptions to their lives largely on their own.

Losing a loved one to an overdose is devastating. Providing linkages to care to survivors will help people deal constructively with their loss and find a path to healing.

We therefore urge a favorable report on House Bill 1485.

HB1485 crossover bill - FAV - Tiarra's Law.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB1485_Crossover Bill_FAV
03/25/2026
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#1485 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee
FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of crossover bill HB#1485, Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)

On May 17, 2020, Tiarra Brown, a Maryland resident living with sickle cell disease, died following an overdose after developing a dependence on prescription opioids that had been prescribed to manage her chronic pain. Based on the circumstances surrounding this death, it has been determined that a structured framework is needed to train first responders, emergency medical service personnel, behavioral health providers, and core service agencies to promote consistent, compassionate, and culturally responsive practices in their engagement with family members. In response to these circumstances, overdose and substance use disorder community partners assessed these events and developed parameters intended to prevent further systemic failures.

This bill meets this moment by requiring the Maryland Department of Health to develop a certain pamphlet relating to State and national crisis support resources; requiring certain health care providers and representatives of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to give the pamphlet to an individual under certain circumstances; and requiring the Department to conduct a review of certain trauma-informed care training.

Maryland can and should do better to ensure that every resident has the highest level of care possible wherever and whenever the health care system is engaged with its residents.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on crossover bill HB1485.

HB1485 - Favorable 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Toni Torsch

Position: FAV



**Daniel Carl Torsch
Foundation**

New day. New beginning.

Date: March 23, 2026

Bill Number: HB 1485

Position: Favorable

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

To: Members of Maryland's Senate Finance Committee

I am writing in favor on HB 1485 that would require the Maryland Department of Health to develop a pamphlet that clearly explains State and national crisis support resources, such as the 9-8-8 Suicide line and other behavioral health crisis services. The bill would require health care providers and representatives of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to provide this pamphlet to individuals in connection with an overdose, behavioral health crisis response, or upon request.

1. Families Affected by Crisis Need Information and Support

When someone experiences a crisis — such as a non-fatal overdose, a suicide attempt, or the tragic death of a loved one — families and caregivers are often left overwhelmed, confused, and without clear guidance on where to get help. And many feel their loved ones continue to have stigma placed on their head, even in the afterlife. Current practices vary, and many individuals report receiving little more than bureaucratic paperwork rather than meaningful information and support. Providing a standard pamphlet with clear, actionable information about crisis resources can bridge that gap and help people connect with lifesaving services and supports.

2. Reducing Stigma and Trauma Through Compassionate Response

The bill's preamble acknowledges that stigma around substance use and behavioral health crises can make encounters with first responders even more traumatic for families. A consistent, compassionate approach — beginning with clear information delivery — helps reduce stigma and promotes healing. Ensuring that medical examiners and health care providers share these resources reinforces the message that support is available and valued.

3. Aligns With Broader Public Health Goals

This bill complements ongoing state efforts to address behavioral health and overdose issues, thus showing a commitment to expanding access to crisis support services.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a **favorable report on HB 1485**.

Toni Torsch, Director

Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation

www.dctfoundationinc.org

443-554-6150

9712 Belair Road, Su 205, Nottingham MD 21236