



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

April 1, 2026

House Health Committee

Senate Bill 870 — Maryland Department of Health - Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Beds - Reports on Capacity and Outcomes

POSITION: Favorable

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, 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, as amended. As originally introduced, this legislation sought to address a critical gap in Maryland's behavioral health infrastructure by requiring the establishment of adolescent psychiatric inpatient capacity in Prince George's County an urgent and longstanding need for our residents. Senate Bill 870 While we recognize the fiscal realities that have led to the bill's amendment into a reporting framework, the underlying issue remains unchanged. The Council views this reporting requirement as an important and necessary step toward developing a comprehensive path forward, and we strongly encourage continued efforts in future sessions to fully realize the intent of expanding inpatient capacity to meet the needs of youth and families across the County.

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.

For Prince George's County, the need for expanded adolescent behavioral health capacity is not theoretical, it is a daily operational challenge with real consequences for youth, families, and local systems. Providers and hospitals in the County continue to experience prolonged emergency department boarding, extended wait times for appropriate placements, and limited access to age-appropriate inpatient care. These gaps place significant strain on families, first responders, schools, and community-based providers, while delaying critical interventions for young people in crisis. Advancing the analysis required under this legislation will help quantify these challenges and inform a data-driven strategy, but it is essential that this work ultimately leads to meaningful investment and implementation in future years.

The Prince George's County Council appreciates the General Assembly's attention to this issue and stands ready to partner with State agencies and stakeholders as this work moves forward. We respectfully urge that the findings of this report serve not as an endpoint, but as a catalyst for guiding future investments and policy decisions that will expand access to critically needed behavioral health services for adolescents. Our youth and families cannot afford continued delays, and we remain committed to working collaboratively to ensure meaningful progress in the sessions ahead.

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

Wayne K. Curry Administration Building – Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772