

February 10, 2026

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and distinguished members of the Health Committee,

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 60,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

HB341 is a crucial step toward addressing the silent mental health crises many men and boys in our State are facing every day.

Often, there is a strong focus on men's physical fitness—such as annual checkups, and heart health — but mental well-being is equally as important because mental health is health! Just as the body needs care and attention, so does emotional and mental well-being. Yet, there is a silent crisis in men's mental health — one that too often goes unnoticed or unspoken. Tragically, men are nearly four times more likely to die by suicide than women, underscoring the urgent need to break this silence and seek support.

Traditional notions of masculinity may discourage emotional expression, leading to underdiagnosed conditions. 40% of men have never spoken about their mental health. Various factors contribute to this issue, such as feelings of embarrassment, not wanting to appear weak, not wanting to be a burden, or feeling like they don't have anyone to talk to.

This bill would promote gender and culturally responsive care across the healthcare system to ensure that men feel seen and supported when asking for help. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

Stephanie Slowly-Little
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