Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

HB 1012 – Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams - Authorization

DATE:	February 24, 2026
COMMITTEE:	House Health Committee
POSITION:	Favorable
FROM:	The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **HB 1012 – Public Health - Local Suicide Fatality Review Teams – Authorization** a favorable report with sponsor amendments. This legislation aims to provide counties and municipalities with the authority to establish local suicide fatality review teams.

Communities across the country are facing significant mental health challenges and rates of suicide continue to rise. As we continue to work to improve the health of Marylanders and reduce mortality rates across the State, we can learn lessons from our successful approach to addressing the opioid crisis. Currently, counties have the authority to establish local overdose fatality review teams, which provide structured and confidential case reviews of overdose fatalities in the County. Frederick County's overdose fatality review team has been incredibly successful in identifying patterns and trends in these fatalities and using their findings to establish intervention strategies that have drastically reduced the number of overdose fatalities county-wide. The effectiveness of these local review teams demonstrates that when local experts have access to relevant data, local governments can implement tailored interventions and solutions that best serve their communities.

The State has a suicide fatality review committee that investigates suicide deaths, identifies risk factors, and recommends prevention measures. However, it focuses only on state-wide data and misses local county trends and strategies. By allowing counties to form their own review teams, local governments can identify solutions that are best fit for their communities, following established guidelines and privacy rules similar to those used by local overdose fatality review teams.

Frederick County is proud that the success of our local overdose fatality review team has led to a decrease in overdose deaths yearly since 2022. I am confident that a Frederick County local suicide fatality review team would be equally successful in identifying points of intervention and reducing preventable mortalities county-wide.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1012. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.

Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD