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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Samuel I. Rosenberg

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
J. Steven Wise
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer

DATE: March 13, 2017

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1288 – *Maryland Insurance Administration – Workgroup on the Provision and Coverage of Behavioral Health Crisis Services*

The Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1288.

House Bill 1288 requires the Maryland Insurance Administration to convene a workgroup of health insurers, community mental health and substance use disorder providers, and other interested stakeholders to identify barriers to the provision of specified behavioral health crisis services and coverage of such services by health insurance carriers and report to the General Assembly by December 1, 2017.

During the 2016 Session, the General Assembly enacted and the Governor signed legislation that requires the Behavioral Health Advisory Council to develop a strategic plan to submit to the General Assembly by December 31, 2017, for ensuring that clinical crisis walk-in services and mobile crisis teams are available statewide and operating 24-hours a day and 7-days a week. This strategic plan is in addition to State law already requiring insurers to provide coverage and residential crisis services to enrollees. However, in trying to increase these services, it has become apparent that significant access issues continue. House Bill 1288 will serve as a much-needed tool in identifying these barriers and developing recommendations to address them to assist in the strategic plan.

For the above reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 1288.

For more information call:

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