




2025 MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD


LEGEND


- Favorable result
- Mixed Result
- Unfavorable result

Score	Bill Number & Title	Status	Impact
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Address Maryland's behavioral health workforce shortage


	HB0034/SB0204 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact	Passed	These bills direct Maryland to join more than 20 other states in participating in the interstate social work compact that allows social workers to obtain an interstate license to practice in any of the participating states. Joining the compact will help address behavioral health workforce shortages and reduce licensure barriers for social workers working in compact states.
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	HB1521/SB0379 State Board of Social Work Examiners – Membership and Examination Requirements	Failed to advance	These bills sought to implement recommendations from the Maryland Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure to eliminate exam requirements for lower-level social work licenses. Eliminating the exam requirement would help address racial disparities in social work licensure exam passage and address the state's behavioral health workforce shortage. The House bill passed later in Session, but the Senate did not support the measures.
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	Supplemental Budget #2 Elimination of the 1% provider rate increase	Adopted	The Governor's introduced budget included a 1% rate increase for most providers, including those offering behavioral health services. This modest rate increase would have improved providers' ability to attract and retain staff and allowed them to better navigate federal and economic uncertainty. The General Assembly initially sought to retain this moderate increase, but the it was ultimately rescinded to contain costs. Rates will now be flat-funded for fiscal year 2026 (FY2026).
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Sustainably fund Maryland's 988 helpline and related behavioral health crisis response services

	HB0421/SB0036 Public Safety – 9-1-1 Trust Fund – 9-8-8 Suicide Prevention Hotline	Passed	These bills eliminate the strict prohibition on using 911 Trust Fund dollars to improve coordination between 911 and 988. This will make it easier to improve interoperability between the two systems and to conduct joint trainings of 911 and 988 specialists.
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	HB1049/SB0599 Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program – Funding	Passed	These bills mandate level funding of \$5 million over the next three years for the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program, which supports mobile crisis teams, walk-in clinics, school-based interventions, and other crisis services throughout the state. Only the Senate bill moved but it ultimately passed both chambers by Sine Die. Grant funding is now mandated at \$5 million per year through FY2029.
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Supplemental Budget #1
Allocation of 988 telecom fee dollars to the 988 Trust Fund

Adopted

In 2024, Maryland established a 988 telecom fee to provide permanent funding for the 988 Trust Fund. The Comptroller began collecting the fee in October, but this new revenue was not properly allocated in the initial FY2026 budget proposal. Advocates sprang into action to ensure this oversight was addressed. The subsequent supplemental budget ensured FY2025 funding was maintained and allocated almost \$24 million for FY2026 from the revenue collected from the 988 telecom fee.



Budget Language
Ensuring \$5 million is allocated to the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program in FY26 and requiring a report

Adopted

The General Assembly did not mandate a FY2026 funding level for the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program and the Governor's proposed budget did not explicitly allocate any funding. Instead, the Behavioral Health Administration indicated that they could maintain level funding at \$5 million through their departmental budget allocation. The General Assembly then passed budget language to dedicate \$5 million to the program and to receive a report on FY2026 program activities.

Strengthen and expand quality behavioral health services for children, youth, and families



HB0504/SB0429
Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Passed with significant amendments

This legislation made changes to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the comprehensive education reform that passed several years ago. The bill initially reduced funding across several areas, including funding for mental health services in schools provided through the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports. Funding for this program was initially reduced from \$130 million to \$40 million annually. This reduction was partially reversed to provide \$100 million in annual funding.



HB1083/SB0790
Behavioral Health Advisory Council and the Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access - Plan to Implement Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Requirements

Passed

These bills direct an existing workgroup of the Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access Commission to craft recommendations regarding recent federal guidance on Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) for children in Medicaid. The guidance directs states to ensure that EPSDT requirements are being met and that children, including young children and those with complex needs, are receiving proper coverage and services.



Establish Overdose Prevention Sites and other effective harm reduction and recovery strategies to prevent fatal overdose



HB0556/SB0370

Drug Paraphernalia
for Administration -
Decriminalization

Failed to
advance

The criminal penalties for drug paraphernalia possession make it challenging to participate in syringe service programs (SSP) and harm reduction efforts. SSP participants are supposed to be exempt from criminal prosecution for drug paraphernalia, but law enforcement does not always abide by this exemption. These bills would decriminalize paraphernalia without qualification to ensure SSP staff and participants do not face arrest or harassment for paraphernalia possession. They failed to advance out of committee.



HB0729/SB0594

Public Health - Use of
Opioid Restitution Fund and
Training Under the Overdose
Response Program

Passed

These bills direct the Maryland Department of Health to provide training on compassionate overdose reversal that minimizes withdrawal symptoms and provides support after the overdose. They also clarify that the Maryland Opioid Restitution Fund can be used for any purpose included in the opioid settlement agreements, not just those enumerated in statute.



HB0845/SB0083

Public Health - Overdose
and Infectious Disease
Prevention Services Program

Failed to
advance

These bills would have authorized up to six overdose prevention sites (OPS) as demonstration projects to provide medical supervision while individuals use pre-obtained drugs. OPS programs are highly effective at preventing fatal overdose and are well-established in dozens of other countries. The Baltimore Mayor's Office formally endorsed the legislation, but the bills did not advance.



HB1131

Public Health -
Buprenorphine - Training
Grant Program and
Workgroup

Passed

This bill establishes a small grant program to train paramedics in administering buprenorphine to address opioid withdrawal and cravings after an overdose. It also directs the Maryland Office of Overdose Response to convene a workgroup to develop recommendations for increasing buprenorphine access and use in the state.



HB1398/SB0604

Criminal Law - Distribution of
Heroin or Fentanyl Causing
Serious Bodily Injury or
Death

Failed to
advance
**(BHSB
opposed)**

These bills would have created a new enhanced penalty of up to an additional 20 years in prison for those found liable for distributing drugs that led to an overdose. Such harsh penalties do not deter drug use or distribution and discourage reporting potentially reversible overdoses. BHSB helped organize advocacy efforts to oppose these bills and neither advanced.



Improve quality and accountability within the public behavioral health system



HB0722

Maryland Department of Health - Report on Oversight of Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs and Recovery Residences

Passed

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to report on improvements to the oversight of substance use disorder treatment programs and recovery residences.



HB0798/SB0589

Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard

Passed

These bills require the state to create a publicly available dashboard on Maryland Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) funding decisions and programs. This will improve transparency and ensure ORF dollars are being used effectively.



HB1066

Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access – Workgroups

Passed

This bill creates a new workgroup within the Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access that will review research and programming related to substance use. The workgroup will provide recommendations for mitigating harms related to substance use and for ensuring proper discharge planning from treatment programs.



HB1146/SB0900

Maryland Behavioral Health Crisis Response System – Integration of 9–8–8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Network and Outcome Evaluations

Passed

These bills clarify the required reporting within the Maryland crisis response system and define the role of 988 in that system. These modest clarifications will improve system transparency and aid in planning for future system improvements.



Other significant behavioral health legislation



HB0032/SB0043

Maryland Department of Health - Forensic Review Board – Established

Passed

These bills establish baseline requirements for the operation of forensic review boards at state psychiatric facilities. These requirements provide basic due process protections and clear expectations for making discharge determinations for patients committed at state facilities.



HB0382/SB0111

Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription to Treat Serious Mental Illness

Failed to advance

These bills would have prohibited Medicaid and private insurers from requiring step therapy, fail-first protocols, or prior authorization for certain medications used to treat serious mental illnesses. These policies allow the state and insurers to provide preferential status to certain medications, but they also can be a barrier to patients obtaining the medications that work best for them. This is especially problematic for individuals with serious mental illness because the effectiveness of a given medication varies greatly from one person to the next. These bills did not move forward due to cost concerns but there was interest in continuing to research the issue.



HB0869/SB0372

Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025

Passed with minor amendments

These bills removed the sunset clause for current telehealth access policies in Maryland. Telehealth services, including audio-only telehealth, will remain a permanent part of Maryland's health care landscape. Minor amendments were added to require routine reporting on the use of telehealth and to establish basic expectations for telehealth providers.



SB0741

Forensic Mental Health Treatment

Failed to advance

This bill sought to address the backlog in placements and discharges at state forensic mental health facilities. It included provisions that would make it more difficult to reduce beds at psychiatric facilities and earmarked a funding source for increasing the number of psychiatric beds. It also established a workgroup to review forensic mental health cases and make recommendations. The bill did not move forward, but this issue will remain pertinent for the foreseeable future.

Learn more about BHSB's advocacy work at

www.bhsbaltimore.org/get-involved/advocate/