

Preamble

WHEREAS, There has been a significant increase in the need for community public mental health services and the lack of these services, including comprehensive crisis intervention services and supports, has resulted in an overutilization of costly acute care State hospital beds; and

WHEREAS, The Mental Hygiene Administration recommends the establishment of an initiative to identify and provide enhanced community-based services for individuals who are at high risk for repeated hospitalizations, homelessness, criminal arrest, or suicide; and

WHEREAS, In the recent report to the Governor by the Community Access Steering Committee, the Committee concluded that one of the major barriers to expanding community access to mental health treatment is the lack of a comprehensive, statewide mental health crisis intervention system as an alternative to hospitalization; and

WHEREAS, The recent terrorism attacks, including those of September 11, 2001, have resulted in increased anxiety and other mental disorders among citizens throughout the United States, particularly among those who have had previous experiences with trauma, and increased concern about the possibility of future terrorist attacks, warranting the establishment of a comprehensive statewide mental health crisis response system; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Health - General

1-101.

- (a) In this article the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (c) "Department" means the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- (j) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene.

10-101.

- (a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (b) "Administration" means the Mental Hygiene Administration.

SUBTITLE 14. MARYLAND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM.

10-1401.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "CORE SERVICE AGENCY" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 10-1201 OF THIS TITLE.