



**HEARING NOTES**  
**Council Resolution: 20-0239R**

**Informational Hearing – Responding to Mental Health Crises**

**Committee:** Health  
**Chaired by:** Kristerfer Burnett  
**Hearing Date:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020  
**Time (Beginning):** 2:00 PM  
**Time (Ending):** 5:05 PM  
**Location:** Virtual "WebEx" Meeting  
**Total Attendance:** Approximately 50

Bill Synopsis in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Attendance sheet in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Agency reports read? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a

**Major Speakers**  
*(This is not an attendance record.)*

- Tevis Simon, Speaker
- Ken Jiretsu, Speaker
- Maura Taylor, Speaker
- David Prater, Disability Rights Maryland
- Dr. Cynthia Major Lewis, Mental Health
- Dr. Paul Nestadt, Mental Health
- D'Paul, Nibber, Health Department
- Michelle Wirzberger, Police Department
- Major Martin Bartness, Police Department
- Paul Mincarelli, Police Department
- Adrienne Breidenstine, Behavioral Health System Baltimore
- Kerry Graves, National Alliance on Mental Illness Baltimore

- Danny Murphy, Police Department
  - Tisha Edwards, Mayor's Office of Family and Children Success
  - Rachel Sage, Licensed Social worker
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### **Major Issues Discussed**

1. The Chairman thanked Councilman Cohen for introducing the Resolution and stated, "This is a very importance issue."
2. Councilman Cohen gave opening remarks. Some highlights of his conversation were:
  - The system is broken for how we handle mental health issues
  - Talked about some of the issues pertaining to mental health
  - Is excited to hear from people today on this issue
  - Today is a start on how we can do better on this issue
3. Testimony was received from several city agency representations, speakers and organizations. Some highlights of their conversations were:
  - Three (3) speakers talked about some of their **life experiences**:
    - Talked about an issue concerning a friend who was mentally unstable and the encounter he/she experienced with police officers
    - Is the parent of special needs children; talked about some of the experiences his family had whenever police officer(s) had to be called to their address; (the son was traumatized and reacts differently whenever he sees an officer; he is terrified of police officers)
    - Has three (3) daughters between the ages of 17 to 37 years
      1. Have long term experience with mentally ill people
      2. Child became severely depressed and was a victim of a severe trauma event
      3. The trauma associated with her child affects her too!
      4. Talked about how the child interacted with police officers
        - About how police officers' responses
        - About some of the negative attitudes officers have when dealing with those with mental illness
    - Concerns:
      - Lack of equity and access
      - Hard to get the help needed
      - Police Officers are not social workers and don't have the background to deal with those with mental health issues
      - Need affordable treatment
      - Should not have to depend on police officers to deal with mental health issues
      - Trauma and lack of service available – is of grave concern
    - Hurt people hurt other people!

- A representative from **Disability Rights Maryland** testified:
  - Talked about the background of the Office
  - There is a lack of community based services for those with disabilities; thereby many are placed in jails or mental facilities
  - Goal is to prevent re-institutionalization
  - What he brings to the table is the importance of value
  - Concern: Having to depend on Police Officers to deal with those with mental illnesses issues
  - Consultation with students is needed
  - More crises services needed
  - More trauma informed practices needed
  - Adequate discharge services needed
  - We must be accountable for the communities we served by having more and better services available
  - The Mobile Crises Team is available 24 hours/7 days a week
- **Two (2) Doctors** testified:
  - Are mental health professions
  - Here today to talk about what is needed to make things better
  - Talked about:
    1. Emergency Department
    2. Emergency Partitions
  - Talked about what an emergency partition entails:
    1. How to file
    2. Who can file
    3. Partition must be signed off by a judge
  - Talked about what the Emergency Departments does:
    1. Transports
    2. The people who are brought in mostly come on a non-voluntary basis
    3. How clients are evaluated and how they are discharged
    4. Talked about how long an emergency partition lasts
      - must make sure a Judge signed off on partition
    6. Talked about the screening processes
    7. Evaluations
  - Types of mental illnesses
  - Can't confine individuals against his/her will unless it is a criminal situation
  - Homelessness - some cases are associated with mental health issues
  - Talked about some of the laws on the books
  - Police are not mental health specialists
  - Live ammunition should not be used on those with mental health issues
  - Need increased resources; a data collection system and increased education training
  - Most changes made will need to be made on the State level
- **Committee/councilmembers** made comments and asked questions. Some were:
  - The processes used for Intake follow-up, is this a universal process used across the state of Maryland?
  - Concern: Challenges associated when clients/patients are discarded

1. Lack of basic humanity
  2. Lack of continuum of care
  3. After the partition(s) is closed out, what type of services are available? **Response: The Maryland Psychiatric Society is a good resource for the City to look into**
- Several representatives from the **Police Department** testified:
    - We must be a call for services and community
    - We support the recommendations made today and looks forward to changes
    - We don't want to criminalize those with these challenges
    - Talked about training provided by the Department
    - There is a significant influx of calls associated with mental health issues
    - Talked about the Department's policies as it relates to the Consent Decree and to behavioral disabilities
    - Talked about some of their partnerships
    - Comments about the Department's responsibility to deescalate situations
  - Councilman Cohen made the following comments:
    - It feels like more of the work on this issue is police-driven
    - A Police having to response in these situations is not the right response
  - A representative from the **Behavioral Health System Baltimore** testified:
    - Gave a PowerPoint Presentation – **a copy is on file**
    - Comment: Society is trained to call the police for all issues!
    - Society is asking our police to do too much!
    - Talked about the mission, goals, core functions of the Behavioral Health System Baltimore (an overview)
  - A representative from the **National Alliance on Mental Illness Metropolitan Baltimore testified:**
    - Talked about the duties of the organization
    - Comment: Values the partnership the organization have with the Police Department
  - A representative from the **Mayor's Office of Family and Children Success/Human Services** testified:
    - Comment: This meeting/conversation was a much needed conversation
    - Talked about and gave statistical data regarding mental health/illnesses in Baltimore City
  - Councilman Cohen asked the representative to, "describe where your work with youths is going." **Response: We are focusing on healing and resiliency, such as mentoring. We also need a continuum of care.**
  - A **Licensed Social Worker** testified:
    - There has been a lot of conversation here today but not many social workers are in attendance
    - Concerns:
      1. Lack of access for treatment
      2. Issue also affects Social Workers due to high turnover
      3. More oversight is needed after clients are released
      4. Would hope that more ambulatory services become available to handle more of the calls

- Talked about an experience she had pertaining to getting an emergency partition
  - 4. The chairman thanked everyone for attending and stated, "This is an extremely pressing issue. I look forward to continuing this conversation."
  - 5. Hearing was called to recess.
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### Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes  No

If yes, describe.

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*Marguerite M. Currin*

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff

Date: September 25, 2020

cc: Bill File  
OCS Chrono File



## Baltimore City Council Committee Hearing Attendance Record

<b>Subject:</b> <span style="background-color: yellow;">Council Resolution</span> - Informational Hearing – Responding to Mental Health Crises	<b>Resolution #:</b> 20-0239R
<b>Committee:</b> Health	<b>Chair:</b> Kristerfer Burnett
<b>Date:</b> <span style="background-color: yellow;">Tuesday, September 22, 2020</span>	<b>Time:</b> 2:00 PM
<b>Location:</b> <del>Clarence "Doc" Burns Council Chamber</del> <i>Virtual Webex Meeting</i>	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY



First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	<b>Testify</b>	What is your position on this bill?		Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*	
				For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		<i>See Hearing Notes</i>					

\*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Health

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Tuesday, September 22, 2020

2:00 PM  
Virtual Webex Hearing: Phone: +1-408-418-9388, Access Code:  
173 368 9303, Password: Public,  
[https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/onstage/g.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/onstage/g.php?MTID=ea8acc2b83b7fe2647d5b871895aa5560)  
MTID=ea8acc2b83b7fe2647d5b871895aa5560

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20-0239R

#### CALL TO ORDER

#### INTRODUCTIONS

#### ATTENDANCE

**Present** 4 - Kristerfer Burnett, Bill Henry, Mary Pat Clarke, and Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer

**Absent** 1 - Edward Reisinger

#### ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

##### 20-0239R

##### **Informational Hearing - Responding to Mental Health Crises**

For the purpose of inviting representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Health Department, the Baltimore City Fire Department, Mayor's Office of Human Services, Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc., the 911 Call Center, and advocates of mental health to investigate how behavioral and mental health crises are handled, identify gaps, and develop the best path forward for addressing and de-escalating crises.

**Sponsors:** Zeke Cohen, John T. Bullock, Bill Henry, Kristerfer Burnett, Mary Pat Clarke, Sharon Green Middleton, Ryan Dorsey, Leon F. Pinkett, III, Edward Reisinger, Shannon Sneed, Robert Stokes, Sr., President Brandon M. Scott

Hearing was recessed.

#### ADJOURNMENT