



INJURY PREVENTION  
**Fact Sheet**

## Next Generation 911: Maryland Answers the Call to Upgrade the State's Emergency Response System

Maryland's current 911 system was developed in the 1960s, and what was state-of-the-art in communications then, is woefully outdated now. As a result, the system does not provide the most effective and efficient emergency response possible. Many people experiencing an emergency do not realize that most 911 centers in Maryland cannot receive their text messages or videos. Nor can the 911 operator determine a caller's location when the caller uses a cell phone. "Next Generation 911" brings much-needed updates to antiquated systems like Maryland's. Several states have already implemented or have begun to implement "Next Generation 911" at the state level, including Indiana, Ohio, and Alabama.<sup>1</sup> In 2018, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to advance Next Generation 911 in Maryland<sup>2</sup>.

### Maryland's Antiquated System

- In 2016, over 5 million 911 calls were made in Maryland<sup>3</sup>.
- Seventy percent of 911 calls today are made from cell phones and are increasingly being made over the Internet<sup>4</sup>.
- The current system is based on a landline phone system and circuit-switched architecture<sup>5</sup>.
- This causes many 911 systems to be unable to receive location information, text messages, photos, and videos<sup>6</sup>.
- Local jurisdictions have had problems, especially near county borders, because emergency calls have been sent to the wrong dispatch center<sup>7</sup>.
- The Board of Public Works recently approved a \$2.4 million contract that will allow first responders across Maryland to receive texts. However, location information would not be automatically provided but would still have to be texted<sup>8</sup>.

### Next Generation 911

- Enhances emergency services by allowing digital information to be sent from the public to emergency 911 services; that information can then be passed to first responders<sup>9</sup>.
- Allows 911 call centers to transfer callers to other centers, which is particularly helpful during disasters and overload<sup>10</sup>.
- At least 20 states have adopted a statewide plan for the implementation of Next Generation 911<sup>11</sup>.

### What the New Legislation Does

- [HB634/SB285](#), passed unanimously in the Maryland House and Senate, establishes a commission to advance Next Generation 911 across Maryland.<sup>12</sup> It addresses:
  - Implementation, management, operation
  - Costs and funding
  - Best practices, policies, procedures.
- The commission's final report is due to the Governor by December 1, 2019.

## SUPPORTERS



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This document was developed by Alec Prechtel, JD Candidate '19, at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, with direction and assistance from Kathleen Hoke, JD, Director of the Network for Public Health Law — Eastern Region Office. The Network for Public Health Law provides information and technical assistance on issues related to public health. The legal information and assistance provided in this document does not constitute legal advice or legal representation. For legal advice, please consult specific legal counsel.

<sup>1</sup> *Status of NG9-1-1 State Activity*, NENA (Feb 2, 2018), [http://www.nena.org/?page=NG911\\_StateActivity](http://www.nena.org/?page=NG911_StateActivity).

<sup>2</sup> *HB0634: Commission to Advance Next Generation 9-1-1 Across Maryland-Establishment*, GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND [http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmgaf/mMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=03&id=HB0634&tab=subject\\_3&ys=2018RS](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmgaf/mMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=03&id=HB0634&tab=subject_3&ys=2018RS) (last visited Apr. 4, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> *2016 National 911 Progress Report*, 911.GOV (Dec. 2016) [https://www.911.gov/pdf/National\\_911\\_Program\\_Profile\\_Database\\_Progress\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://www.911.gov/pdf/National_911_Program_Profile_Database_Progress_Report_2016.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *HB634 Fiscal and Policy Note*, DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES, [http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/fnotes/bil\\_0004/hb0634.pdf](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/fnotes/bil_0004/hb0634.pdf) (last visited Apr. 11, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> *HB634 Fiscal and Policy Note*, DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES, [http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/fnotes/bil\\_0004/hb0634.pdf](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/fnotes/bil_0004/hb0634.pdf) (last visited Apr. 11, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> *Md.'s Outdated 911*, BALTIMORE SUN (Mar. 4, 2018), <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0306-next-generation-20180302-story.html>.

<sup>7</sup> *Baltimore County to Receive \$4M Grant for 911 Upgrades*, Pamela Wood (Sept. 6, 2016), <http://www.baltimore-sun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-county/bs-md-co-911-grant-20160906-story.html>.

<sup>8</sup> *New Maryland System Will Allow 911 Requests via Text Messages*, Michael Dresser & Alison Knezevich (Feb. 21, 2018), <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-911-text-20180221-story.html>.

<sup>9</sup> *Next Generation 911*, NTIA, <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/category/next-generation-911> (last visited Apr. 11, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> *Next Generation 911*, NTIA, <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/category/next-generation-911> (last visited Apr. 11, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> *2017 National 911 Progress Report*, 911.GOV, <https://www.911.gov/pdf/National-911-Program-Profile-Database-Progress-Report-2017.pdf> (last visited Apr. 11, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> *HB634 Fiscal and Policy Note*, DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES, [http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/fnotes/bil\\_0004/hb0634.pdf](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/fnotes/bil_0004/hb0634.pdf) (last visited Apr. 11, 2018).