



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 15, 2023

To: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair, House Ways & Means Committee

Re: Letter of Information- House Bill 461- Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 461.

There are [hospital-based sexual assault forensic medical programs](#) statewide where specially trained forensic nurse examiners provide trauma-informed and patient-centered care to survivors of sexual assault, abuse, neglect, interpersonal violence, and human trafficking.

MHA partnered with the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force's medical subcommittee and the University of Maryland SAFE Center in 2020 to update the state's [Human Trafficking: Guidelines for Health Care Providers](#). Subsequently, MHA partnered with the SAFE Center to train health care providers in hospitals across the state. The health care workforce often serves as the first line of defense to identify signs and symptoms of human trafficking.

HB 461 requires the State Board of Education and certain nonpublic schools to develop and implement age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault and on human trafficking. Sexual assault and human trafficking are widespread, and education on prevention, identification, and how to respond can empower students and teachers so they too can serve as a line of defense.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information on sexual assault and human trafficking, and Maryland hospitals' response to these critical public health issues.

For more information, please contact:
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