



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 615–
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services - Sexual Assault
Evidence Collection Kit Reporting Program**

Position: *Support*

March 9, 2023

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 615.

Across the state, hospital-based sexual assault forensic exam ([SAFE](#)) programs employ forensic nurse examiners. These registered nurses receive special training in evidence collection and are experts in delivering trauma-informed care to survivors of violence and abuse. State law ensures survivors of sexual assault have access to emergency medical treatment for injuries sustained because of the assault with no out-of-pocket expenses.

MHA has proudly served as a member of the [Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee \(SAEK Committee\)](#) since its inception. This Committee collaborated to develop processes and issue guidance for stakeholders who support survivors of sexual assault. In 2018, the Committee received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to conduct a statewide inventory, test a portion of the unsubmitted kits, establish a statewide tracking system, and provide victim services.¹

SB 615 is the result of several years of discussion within the Committee to identify the components needed for a successful kit tracking system and agreement among stakeholders to participate. Through conversations with other states, we've observed many benefits associated with implementing a statewide tracking system, including, most importantly, allowing survivors to track the status of their kits. Maryland's SAFE programs are committed to participating and using the tracking system.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 615.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee. (January, 2023). "[Annual Report](#)".