



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 361/House Bill 351- Creation of a State Debt - Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan of 2024

Position: *Support*

March 5, 2024
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee

March 4, 2024
House Appropriations Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 361/House Bill 351. This year, \$6.839 million is requested for six projects that benefit the health of all Marylanders. The recommended projects will enhance and expand access to behavioral health care in Maryland and improve the patient experience in outpatient settings. In addition to this letter, MHA supplied the Department of Budget and Management with the requested data on these recommended projects through the Capital Budget Information System.

Process for Selecting and Recommending Projects

MHA has been a dedicated steward of the Private Hospital Facilities Grant Program since its inception in 1993. The Committee conducts an objective and rigorous review process that prioritizes worthy capital projects that incorporate both state and health care criteria. MHA engages an independent consultant to help review applications. The review Committee, which convened in August, includes Maryland hospital leaders, trustees, Department of Budget and Management and Department of Legislative Services staff, an independent consultant, and MHA staff. The Committee conducts a final review, determines scoring based on established criteria, and makes funding recommendations.

Rationale for Recommendations

The hospital field asks you to maintain the funding levels for the six projects included in the FY 2025 capital budget. These funding levels correlate with the amount originally requested by the applicants for these projects. Access to capital funding is critical for hospitals as they care for their communities.

Recommendations

Each project was scored on criteria aligned with the goals of Maryland's Total Cost of Care Model, including improving quality and enhancing the health of communities. Both the volume and acuity of behavioral health patients visiting emergency departments continues to increase, especially in the pediatric population. All but one of the recommended projects seeks to meet the behavioral health needs of youth and adolescents.

The six projects are recommended to enhance health care in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Prince George's, and Washington counties and Baltimore City, including:

Kennedy Krieger Children's Hospital Inc. (Baltimore City)

Project Name: Transformation of Outpatient Center Office Space to Enhance Medical and Mental Health Services

Recommended Allocation: **\$1,250,000**

This project will transform 16,000 net square feet of existing administrative Kennedy Krieger Children's Hospital Outpatient Center office space into care areas for medical and mental health services for children, youth, and adults with, and those at risk for, disorders of the developing nervous system. This project seeks to expand, reconfigure layouts, update finishes, and upgrade critical infrastructure of The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building. Renovation of the existing space will increase current medical clinic space by 40%, allow for a more efficient and effective patient experience, and reduce delays in access to care, in turn improving equity and outcomes for patients.

University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center LLC (Baltimore County)

Project Name: Outpatient Cardiovascular Center

Recommended Allocation: **\$1,400,000**

This project renovates 19,690 square feet of space on the first floor of the O'Dea Medical Arts Building on University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center campus to create a modern Outpatient Cardiovascular Center. The new Outpatient Cardiovascular Center will promote a multi-disciplinary, patient-centered approach to cardiovascular care housing general cardiology, interventional cardiology, electrophysiology, and cardiac and vascular surgery practices. The Center will coordinate the delivery of services to achieve optimal access to care, quality of care, and personalized attention, at the lowest cost possible. This project will enhance patient experience by streamlining and improving the efficiency of patient encounters, improving provider communication and collaboration, facilitating cardiac diagnostic scheduling, and advancing health and wellness initiatives to reduce cardiovascular diseases for the communities served by the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center.

Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center (Anne Arundel County)

Project Name: Pediatric Behavioral Health Emergency Department

Recommended Allocation: **\$1,400,000**

This project enhances the pediatric emergency department (ED) rooms within the hospital pavilion to accommodate the increased volume of behavioral health pediatric patients. Additions include updated hardware, devices, and construction to reduce safety risks in the existing ED rooms. The funds will also renovate an existing ED area into a de-escalation room. Upgrading this room will decrease the need to administer physical restraints and/or heavily medicate patients, enhancing the well-being and safety of one of the most vulnerable patient populations in the ED and protecting the staff.

Sheppard Pratt Health System, Inc. (Baltimore County)

Project Name: Youth and Adolescent School and Residential Treatment Center Renovation Project

Recommended Allocation:

\$500,000

This project addresses growing health and safety concerns at the Sheppard Pratt Health System School and Residential Treatment Center serving youth and adolescents. The renovations will involve repairs and upgrades required to address immediate and ongoing concerns primarily resulting from nine outdated resident bathrooms. Constant issues with inadequate ventilation, regular pipe leaks, and residual water have damaged the bathrooms as well as other areas of the facility. These repairs will improve the therapeutic environment and mitigate health and safety risks for the youth and adolescent residents served by the program.

Meritus Medical Center Inc (Washington County)

Project Name: Emergency Department Renovations

Recommended Allocation:

\$889,000

This project will renovate 9,130 net square feet to address and eliminate safety concerns in the emergency department for patients and staff. This project aims to improve waiting room visibility, infection prevention, and privacy and increase the safety of the eight-bed behavioral health care area. Over a quarter of the annual behavioral health emergency department patients are youth and adolescents. Last year, 15% of these patients required transfer to another facility and experienced an extended stay. The project will improve the experience for these patients by replacing the curtains separating the patient rooms to improve privacy, reduce safety risks, and create a private bathroom with a shower.

Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center Inc. (Prince George's County)

Project Name: Update and Modernization of Emergency Department

Recommended Allocation:

\$1,400,000

This project modernizes the emergency department to meet the high volume and high acuity of patients seeking care. The reconfiguration of the nurses' station, workspace, triage, and waiting rooms will ensure optimal workflow efficiencies. The project entails updating the security and access control systems and creating secure enclosures for clinical systems and devices within the patient rooms. These renovations will improve patient safety, efficiency, and privacy while enhancing staff safety and improving resource utilization for vulnerable and sensitive patient populations.

Department of Legislative Services' Recommendations & Questions

We appreciate the Department of Legislative Services' (DLS) staff time completing the analysis. We respectfully request reconsideration of the projects identified to be deauthorized. The two grants are still within the seven-year term of the grant. There is no need to take action at this time. In the budget analysis, DLS requested comment on the status of Atlantic General's project. The project is paused. The grant is still within the seven-year term. No action is required at this time. We appreciate the legislature's long-time support of the Hospital Bond Program. We are happy to answer any questions and request full funding for the six hospital projects included in the FY 2025 capital budget.

For more information, please contact:

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