



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 973- Hospitals - Private Hospital Grant Program - Funding

Position: *Support*

February 29, 2024

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

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 973.

MHA has been the dedicated steward of the Private Hospital Facilities Grant Program, also known as the Hospital Bond Program, since its inception in 1993. The program was developed through a work group process to organize hospital requests for state capital funding. We appreciate Chair Guzzone's introduction of SB 973, which would codify this long-standing program into law and increase the funding level.

Maryland hospitals utilize the Hospital Bond Program for innovative projects that align with goals under the Maryland Model. Most projects in recent years have focused on emergency department renovations to care for the unique needs of youth and patients with behavioral health needs. This year the Hospital Bond Program Review Committee requested \$6.8 million for six projects. The recommended projects will enhance and expand access to behavioral health care in Maryland and improve patient experience in outpatient settings.

SB 973 outlines the current process for the Hospital Bond Program, which has worked effectively to provide a peer review process by a rotating Review Committee composed of hospital administrators, hospital trustees, and in recent years, hospital staff with expertise in population health. MHA created eligibility criteria and a robust review process that aligns with the requirements under the bill. MHA has a proven track record of acting as good stewards of these state funds and developing a fair process for reviewing and selecting projects.

We appreciate the sponsor's inclusion of \$20 million for the program, which will expand access to much-needed capital funding for more hospitals.

For all of these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 973.

For more information, please contact:

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