



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 28, 2019

To: The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

From: Jennifer Witten, Vice President of Government Affairs
Maryland Hospital Association

Re: Letter of Concern- Senate Bill 469- Drugs and Devices - Electronic Prescriptions –
Requirements

Dear Chairman Kelley:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 469. Maryland's hospitals commend the intent of this legislation and support the adoption of technology that facilitates the coordination of care. However, because technological infrastructure across care settings is not equal, we have concerns about the mandatory use of certain technologies. Some physician practices, for example, do not have the capability to submit electronic prescriptions.

In addition, we are concerned that the penalties within the bill would, rather than encouraging adoption of electronic health records, instead have a stifling effect. Further, eliminating the option for a paper prescription could limit consumer choice when comparing prices and selecting a pharmacy. Under Maryland's unique Total Cost of Care agreement with the federal government, Maryland's hospitals are working to lower costs and improve population health. In addition to treating illness and injury, hospitals are reaching out beyond their four walls to keep people well and improve the health of the communities they serve.

Health information technology is key to helping Maryland continue as a leader in health care delivery, and its adoption has been steadily increasing nationally according to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology¹. However, mandating the use of specific types of technology threatens to have the unintended consequence of rushing implementation of systems that are not fully equipped, thus discouraging innovation. We remain committed to encouraging the use of new technology and ensuring that Marylanders have convenient access to the medications and care coordination they need. We thank you for your careful consideration of this issue.

¹The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. Adoption of Electronic Health Record Systems among U.S. Non-Federal Acute Care Hospitals: 2008-2015. ONC Data Brief 35. (May, 2016) Retrieved from: <https://dashboard.healthit.gov/evaluations/data-briefs/non-federal-acute-care-hospital-ehr-adoption-2008-2015.php>