



Maryland  
Hospital Association

March 11, 2020

To: The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair  
House Health & Government Operations Committee

From: Nicole Stallings, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs & Policy  
Maryland Hospital Association

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 1663 - State Government - State of Emergency and  
Catastrophic Health Emergency - Authority of Governor (COVID-19 Public Health Emergency  
Protection Act of 2020)

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 61 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 1663.

Maryland hospitals are places of health and healing, and, as such, are on the front lines in ensuring people are properly cared for as we see the first reports of the novel coronavirus in our state. Since the world first learned about the spread of coronavirus/COVID-19, Maryland hospitals have worked to ensure our state is prepared during this public health emergency.

Hospitals took swift action to protect patients, communities and staff, while helping lead communication efforts to keep the general public informed. That includes standing up command centers and preparing staff and resources. Hospitals are coordinating daily with state and local agencies to share information about prevention and protection, secure additional protective equipment, and ensure proper triage protocols are in place to limit spread.

MHA is focused on understanding statewide capacity and best practices, convening key stakeholders for decision-making, and supporting the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Emergency Management, and Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems efforts to create a cohesive approach across Maryland. We're coordinating heavily with the Governor's office and others. We're also working closely with the American Hospital Association and other hospital associations, including in Washington state, which has been hard hit by the virus.

Maryland hospitals were ready to address this public health crisis when it first emerged because preparing for disasters is not new to hospitals. Emergency preparedness training is a year-round activity that is done within each facility, system and region to ensure our hospitals and communities are prepared for all manner of disaster, including this one. Caregivers are engaged in a nonstop cycle of planning, coordination, and training that includes providers, as well as public health officials, local government, and other agencies.

As they have with every public health crisis in our state, hospitals are helping to lead efforts to keep Marylanders safe. HB 1663 will support those efforts and improve public safety amid this outbreak.

For these reasons we urge a *favorable* report.

For more information, please contact:

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