



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 9, 2021

To: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair, House Judiciary Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 1233 - Correctional Services - Inmates - Intake and Release Requirements (Reentry Success Act of 2021)

Dear Chair Clippinger:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 1233.

HB 1233 seeks to ensure people can access the support they need before they are released from incarceration. The bill requires the Division of Correction (DOC) to provide appropriate forms and screening to determine eligibility for medical assistance benefits six months before release. The bill also requires that at the time of release, DOC provides public transportation passes for 90 days of travel and a one-month supply of any prescribed medications.

The link between behavioral health issues and incarceration is well-established. Individuals released from prison have higher rates of substance use, chronic medical conditions, and mental health conditions—an estimated 80% of those released from U.S. prisons each year fall into these categories.¹ Maryland hospitals support efforts to invest in justice reform strategies that reduce recidivism and promote public health—especially for Marylanders struggling with behavioral health conditions. Treatment for these complex diseases usually means a long-term recovery period marked by intermittent successes and setbacks. It's critically important these individuals receive the care they need to avert future brushes with law enforcement.

It is well documented that communities of color are overrepresented in our prison systems. As part of our [Commitment to Racial Equity](#), MHA and Maryland hospitals are working to address inequities in access to health care. HB 1233 is a positive step toward ensuring people have access to the health care and social support needed to successfully return to their communities after incarceration.

For these reasons, we encourage a *favorable* report on HB 1233.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Health Affairs. (June, 2017). "[Transitions Clinic Network: Challenges And Lessons In Primary Care For People Released From Prison.](#)"