



Maryland
Hospital Association

House Bill 1313- Emergency Medical Services- Paramedics- Vaccination Administration

Position: *Support with Amendments*

February 23, 2021

House Health & Government Operations Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 1313. Maryland's health care heroes, including emergency medical services (EMS), providers have been on the front lines of the COVID pandemic for nearly a year. In that time, they have saved more than 28,000 lives, supported their communities by providing access to testing, and gone above and beyond to offer food and other necessities to those in need.

Now, as Maryland hospitals implement the first phase of the state's vaccine distribution plan, dedicated caregivers in our hospitals and beyond our walls are leading again as among the first in our state to receive the novel vaccine. Hospital and health systems worked quickly to establish vaccine clinics for their staff and now are preparing to vaccinate their communities. Yet, efforts to scale up vaccinations is limited by a lack of staff to administer vaccines.

Current law allows EMS providers to administer influenza and hepatitis B immunizations and TB skin testing to public safety personnel within their own jurisdiction. HB 1313 expands the list of allowable vaccines a paramedic may administer to include those on the recommended Adult Immunization Schedule from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The bill also allows paramedics, who work for a commercial ambulance company or a local jurisdiction, to administer vaccines to all adults. The amendments offered by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems makes the legislation an emergency bill, clarifies that paramedics can administer vaccines approved under an emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration, and clarifies the role of the EMS medical director.

Under the Governor's proclamation of a state of emergency and a catastrophic health emergency, paramedics can administer COVID-19 vaccinations. However, that expires after the state of emergency ends, but the need for COVID-19 vaccinations will not. Maryland needs every available qualified practitioner to be able to administer these vaccines. HB 1313 allows EMS providers to fully participate in COVID public health efforts beyond the emergency declaration and deploy for any public health vaccination effort needed for a future catastrophic health crisis or regular public health efforts.

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