



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 579 - Health Care Facilities – Restrooms – Requirements

Position: *Oppose*

February 25, 2021

Senate Finance 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 opposition of Senate Bill 579.

The top priority of the health care sector nationwide and in Maryland is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its employees, patients, and visitors. The 2018 *Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals* from The Facilities Guidelines Institute, a national organization that develops guidance for the planning, design, and construction of hospitals and other types of health facilities, includes provisions related to hygiene. More specifically, the Facilities Guidelines Institute issued requirements related to hand-washing stations and “toilet rooms” used by patients. Hospitals in Maryland must comply with these guidelines under regulations of the Maryland Office of Health Care Quality in the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) (see COMAR 10.07.01.02).

Over the past year, Maryland hospitals responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing comprehensive precautions to ensure patient safety. Hospitals regularly treat patients with a variety of infectious diseases and are well-equipped to isolate and treat those patients safely and without harm to others. As a result of the pandemic, hospitals took additional steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and promote safety in accordance with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and MDH. These guidelines include extensive cleaning of exam rooms before and after every appointment and frequently disinfecting common areas, including waiting rooms, elevators, and bathrooms. The guidelines also require staff members to wash their hands before and after every interaction with a patient and ensure hand sanitizer is available for all visitors and patients.

SB 579 would place unnecessary burdens on Maryland hospitals that are already required to meet strict hygiene guidelines.

For these reasons, we urge an ***unfavorable report*** on SB 579.

For more information, please contact:

Brian Frazee, Vice President, Government Affairs

Bfrazee@mhaonline.org