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House Bill 838
Unregulated Space in Hospital Operating Suites Pilot Project Study

Chairman Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk and Health and Government Operations Committee Members,

This bill requires a study to evaluate how to better use underutilized hospital operating room space and the desirability of allowing for an unregulated space in a hospital operating room as a pilot project. This would be done in order to make it less cost prohibitive and more accessible for self-paying, elective patients at higher risk or who need a higher level of immediate post-surgical care, than may be available in a stand-alone facility.

Such a pilot project, if properly constructed, offers a way to address operating room excess capacity currently experienced in many Maryland hospitals, and allows these facilities to price competitively with free-standing Ambulatory Centers while avoiding adding unnecessary capital costs to the system. However, a study is needed because any such program must be carefully constructed to ensure that there is no duplicative payment to hospitals participating in the program and that all payers, including commercial payers, are able to realize savings from the program.

Last year, this bill passed the House, but an unacceptable, last minute senate amendment left no time for reconciliation and passage.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 729.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri L. Hill'.

Terri L. Hill, M.D.