MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 1485

Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Emergency Service Transporters - Reimbursement

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**   To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: March 4, 2020   From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1485 as it seeks to modernize reimbursement for services provided by county-operated or volunteer emergency service transporters to better meet growing demands and shifting needs for treatment.

Emergency service transporters provide vital services to county residents in times of emergency and distress. They deserve to be adequately reimbursed for the care they provide whether that be for life-saving treatment or non-emergency care. The mounting costs of emergency service transports and treatments are exceedingly being borne by the county and volunteer services without adequate increases in State support.

HB 1485 would require emergency service transporters to be reimbursed by Medicaid in cases where they provide treatment to a Medicaid patient without transporting them to a hospital emergency department. The bill correctly recognizes that reimbursement should not solely be predicated on whether the patient was ultimately transported to a hospital emergency department.

Treatment without transport can occur in different scenarios. For instance, in cases where the individual refuses transport to the hospital or when on-scene treatment is provided by a physician or nurse practitioner as part of innovative emergency service transport programs to treat low acuity injuries or health issues. Under current law, the transporters are unable to receive any reimbursements for their services or supplies despite responding to the 9-1-1 call and providing some level of treatment to the individual. This ultimately forces the county or volunteer services to shoulder the costs.

The bill provides a fair, reasonable, and much needed framework to reimburse emergency service transporters. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1485.