



House Bill 1496

Medical Assistance Program - Emergency Service Transporters - Reimbursement for Transportation and Medical Services

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: March 4, 2020

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1496 as it seeks to modernize reimbursement for services provided by county-operated or volunteer emergency service transporters to better meet growing demands and needs for services.

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

HB 1496 would increase the rates for which the Maryland Department of Health is required to reimburse emergency service transporters for transportation of Medicaid patients to a hospital in response to a 9-1-1 call and would require the Department to also reimburse for mileage accrued in response to the transport. The increase in the transport reimbursement is phased in at \$25 a fiscal year until the reimbursement rate reaches at least \$300, and the mileage reimbursement is set at \$3 per mile.

Under current law, Medicaid transport reimbursement is set at \$100 and mileage is not reimbursed at all. For the more rural areas of the state, response to a 9-1-1 call could result in significant mileage to reach the individual in need of assistance and take them to the nearest emergency department. This ultimately forces the county or volunteer services to shoulder the outstanding costs.

The bill provides a fair, reasonable, and much needed framework to improve and increase reimbursement for emergency service transporters. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1496.