



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
MARYLAND FIRE AND RESCUE INSTITUTE
Michael E. Cox, Jr., Executive Director

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February 12, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chairman
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members:

I am writing to bring to your attention some issues that currently exist with the proposed Senate Bill 454 – Public Safety – Mandatory Mental Health Training – First Responders and Law Enforcement Officers.

As the State's comprehensive training and education system for all EMS/Fire/Rescue programs, the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute trains on average more than 35,000 emergency responders a year statewide. A large part of this training is EMS training that includes, both initial certification and recertification courses that meet National EMS Standards, the Maryland Emergency Medical Services Board requirements and regulations promulgated by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) - Maryland's Regulatory Agency for emergency medical services operations.

An additional requirement that mental health training be required for all EMS/Fire/Rescue personnel is unnecessary. Unlike our law enforcement partners, Maryland's EMS/Fire/Rescue personnel receive this training during their initial certification program and periodically as mandated by the State Medical Director (MIEMSS) through a provider's continuing education program that is required for their medical license recertification. In fact, provider continuing education mandated by MIEMSS in 2018 and 2019 included instruction on: dementia; suicide; addiction; post-traumatic stress syndrome; mental health emergencies; mental health for first responders; and behavioral emergencies.

The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute believes that requiring training of EMS/Fire/Rescue providers proposed in Senate Bill 454 is unnecessary and creates regulatory conflicts with the States EMS Board, MIEMSS, and the Maryland Fire and Rescue Training Commission which is a subsidiary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, as well as, the Maryland Police Training Commission which has no regulatory authority over Maryland's EMS/Fire/Rescue providers.

While we believe that this bill is well intended. I would respectfully request that SB 454 be amended to remove any reference to first responders (EMS/Fire/Rescue personnel).

Such an amendment would allow us to support the bill; however, in its current form we would not be able to provide a favorable review.

I want to thank you for continued support of the EMS/Fire/Rescue service. I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Cox, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael E. Cox, Jr., MS, CFO, EFO, NRP
Executive Director

MEC/mec

CC: Assistant Director F. Patrick Marlatt, Special Operations
Acting Assistant Director Stephan Cox, Field Operations
My Files