

February 11, 2021

**Testimony on HB 228
University of Maryland Medical System –
Applicability of the Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act
Health and Government Operations**

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland support HB 228 which would extend the Open Meetings Law and Public Information Act to apply to the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) Corporation.

Each year, the UMMS receives a substantial amount of funding from the state. The members of the UMMS board are also appointed by the Governor. In 2019, the public was made aware that the health system had done business – millions of dollars of business – with the members of the board. This discovery led to numerous investigations and changes to the overall makeup of the board, but transparency has not been made a priority.

The millions that UMMS receives yearly is made available from taxpayer funds. Marylanders should have a right to not only observe, but also access information from the health system. There have been previous efforts calling on the General Assembly to make the health system provide meeting agendas and minutes from board meeting. Also, proactive disclosure of documents concerning the finances of the health system. We urge the committee the committee to take steps to ensure UMMS is subject to some level of public scrutiny.

An open and transparent government is critical to ensure Marylanders have trust and confidence in the government – this includes bodies receive funding from the government. Maryland's open meetings law and public information act seeks to bring policy decisions to light and should be applied to UMMS.

We urge a favorable report.