

TO: The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Annie Coble
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Johns Hopkins University and Medicine urges a **favorable** report on **HB378 Maryland Health Care Commission – Palliative Care Services- Workgroup**. This bill requires MHCC to convene a workgroup to study palliative care services and make recommendations to improve palliative care services. Palliative care is specialized medical care that helps patients facing serious illnesses and their families by adding an extra layer of support.

Johns Hopkins offers compassionate, supportive palliative care for patients and families receiving treatment at Johns Hopkins hospitals across the state. The primary goal of our program is to ensure that patients dealing with complex illnesses are as free of symptoms as possible and have the mental and emotional well-being, we want our patients to have quality of life and be able to do the things they want to do.

As a result of 2013 legislation, MHCC conducted a study and provided recommendations on Maryland Hospital Palliative Care Programs. In 2016, all hospitals were mandated to have an accredited Palliative Care Program. Unfortunately, there has not been much progress in the work of palliative care statewide since then. This workgroup creates a vital opportunity to continue the work the State started so many years ago.

It is necessary for the State of Maryland to take a leading role on understanding palliative care. The Workgroup commissioned in this bill would allow for a much-needed deep dive into the palliative care for all Marylanders. The Workgroup is a first step into expanding the important care by identifying barriers and strategies to overcome the barriers. For these reasons and more, Johns Hopkins urges a favorable report on HB378.