



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 24, 2022

To: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair, House Ways & Means Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 725- Children - Therapeutic Child Care Program - Funding

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 725.

This bill establishes a Therapeutic Child Care Program to deliver specialized childcare and early childhood education for children with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. The bill includes an annual appropriation.

Three programs in Maryland specialize in caring for medically fragile children. PACT, an affiliate of Kennedy Krieger Institute, for example, is the only childcare center in the Baltimore metropolitan area that cares for medically fragile children younger than 5 who are experiencing homelessness. Services are provided without regard to the family's ability to pay. PACT relies on grants and donations, which is not sufficient to cover the actual cost of these services.

The Lourie Center for Children's Social & Emotional Wellness, a member of Adventist HealthCare, has offered a therapeutic childcare program, specialized preschool, and family-focused services for more than 35 years. The Center serves approximately 4,000 children and families.¹ Research shows the effectiveness of interventions through the Center, which also relies on grant funding and donations.

HB 725 would provide the stable funding needed to continue these critical services. Sometimes children with special medical needs remain in hospitals beyond what is medically necessary if a parent or guardian does not have the resources or family supports to care for a child at home. Funding for therapeutic childcare programs supports the child receiving care as well as their family.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on HB 725.

For more information, please contact:
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¹ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2017). "[The Lourie Center for Children's Social and Emotional Wellness](#)".