



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
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HB 274

February 21, 2023

TO: Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 274 – Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times

POSITION: Support

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 274.

HB 274 seeks to establish an appointed Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times to identify potential solutions to reduce wait times in Maryland emergency departments and to study best practices for emergency department staffing, triage, and bed availability in states that have populations similar to Maryland's.

Nationally, emergency department (ED) patients wait more than 90 minutes before they are taken to their ED exam room (hbr.org). According to reports using Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services data, Maryland has the longest average ED wait times in the country, at 228 minutes (beckershospitalreview.com). Delays in care, especially involving hospital admissions from emergency departments, may increase a patient's risk of death within the following 30 days (emj.bmj.com).

We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 274, which will establish a task force to identify best practices and solutions for reducing ED wait times that can lead to better health outcomes for Maryland residents. We hope that the recommendations from this Task Force will address solutions for (and not limited to): workforce support, health equity, strengthening and streamlining patient care experiences within primary care, mental health, and social needs systems across the state.