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**Testimony of Jennifer Fritzeen, MSN, RN, PCNS
Trauma and Burn Surgery Program Manager
Children's National Hospital
before
House Appropriations Committee
IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT
HB 1439: Public Health – Funding for Trauma Centers and Services**

February 28, 2024

Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of House Bill 1439 with amendment. My name is Jennifer Fritzeen and I am the Trauma and Burn Surgery Program Manager at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

House Bill 1439 takes an important step towards financially supporting the entire Maryland trauma system, of which Children's National plays a vital role. Children's National is one of only two Level I Pediatric Trauma centers serving Maryland's children in need of the highest level of trauma care. As a result, the hospital receives \$590,000 annually from the Maryland Trauma Physicians Services Fund. Since the last funding increase in 2008, trauma volume has surged at our hospital by 17%. In 2022 alone, we cared for 866 Maryland trauma patients and on average, children residing in Maryland comprise 55-60% of the total trauma volume at Children's National. The hospital's commitment to providing immediate and specialized care comes with substantial costs to maintain readiness for trauma activations.

Recognizing the gaps in trauma funding, during the 2023 legislative session, the General Assembly established the Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding (the Commission). As an integral part of the Maryland Trauma System, in its final report, the Commission recommended

increasing the annual funding to Children's National from \$590,000 to \$900,000 for uncompensated care provided to Maryland children and for on-call costs associated with trauma readiness. Consistent with the Commission's recommendation, we have offered an amendment to increase Children's National annual funding from the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund to at least \$900,000 (*enclosed*).

We applaud the Maryland General Assembly for creating the Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding and for introducing this legislation, which is essential for the Maryland Trauma System to continue to deliver exceptional, high-quality, and timely care to trauma patients across Maryland. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 1439 with the stated amendment. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Trauma Fund – Amendment for Children’s National

The annual payment to Children’s was last adjusted in 2008. MHCC, in its most recent report, recommends an increase in the annual payment to \$900,000.

AMENDMENT

“SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:
Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2008

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Health Services Cost Review Commission shall develop guidelines for the approval of an annual grant from the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund under § 19–130 of the Health – General Article of [up to \$590,000] AT LEAST \$900,000 to subsidize the stand–by costs for an out–of–state pediatric trauma center that has entered into an agreement with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Services Systems.”.