



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Unit
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 28, 2024
BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1439 **POSITION:** Letter of Information
BILL TITLE: Public Health – Funding for Trauma Centers and Services

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This legislation increases the funding to the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund by requiring 10% of fines collected from persons convicted of drunk or drugged driving to be transferred into the fund. The bill also increases the motor vehicle surcharge and provides that a portion of the increase shall be paid into the fund. The legislation repeals the authority of the Maryland Emergency Medical System Operations Fund (MEMSOF) to use funds for the medically oriented functions of the Department of State Police Aviation Command (DSPAC).

Under current law, the revenues of the MEMSOF provide 80% of the funding for the DSP medevac program in Maryland. The balance of MEMSOF is used to support the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, University of Maryland Shock Trauma, Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund, and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services. The funding for MEMSOF comes from a surcharge placed on Maryland motor vehicle registrations. The medevac system is free to everyone transported by the DSP helicopter.

House Bill 1439, while increasing the amount of money contributed into the MEMSOF, eliminates the funding for the DSP Aviation Command medevac services; a world premier program. Eliminating the funding source for this program, in short, eliminates the program. The results: air frames sold or scrapped, civilians terminated and the medics (sworn troopers) assigned to road patrol duties, providing there are vacancies. Most egregious, the patients outside of a drivable radius within the golden hour will not have access to world class medical treatment at one of Maryland's designated trauma centers. DSP does not have general funds to replace \$45.2 million dollars of MEMSOF funding to keep this program going.

Other states and countries have used Maryland as the example of how to run a medevac supported trauma system. The Maryland medevac program is considered one of the best in the world today. The program was designed to be a free service for any patient determined to need the emergency rescue and transportation to a trauma center. In 2021, the Aviation Command had 3,933 missions with 1,840 patients transported. In 2022, there were 2,978 missions with 1,861 patients transported. In 2023, the Aviation Command, safely completed 1,916 scene medevacs, flying 1,956 patients; responded to 141 law enforcement missions, flew 174 search and rescue missions; and completed 18 hoist/aerial rescue operations, rescuing 18 victims. DSP Aviation Command is the only provider of helicopter rescues with hoist operations.

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In May of 2023, the Department of State Police Aviation Command began carrying Whole Blood on each of its seven helicopters, instituting the first state-wide program of this type in the United States. This new capability was as a result of years of work by a collaborative team from DSPAC, University of Maryland Shock Trauma, and the University of Maryland Medical Center Blood Bank. Each helicopter is equipped with two units of Low Titer O+ Whole Blood and is available to treat critically injured patients with significant blood loss prior to arriving at a trauma center. The impact of transfusing Whole Blood has been remarkable for 63 patients transported between May and the end 2023. Several lives have been saved as a result of receiving Whole Blood in the field.

With the support of its pilots, trooper/flight paramedics and maintenance technicians, the Department of State Police Aviation Command continues to capitalize on its multi-mission capability by combining the superior performance of the AW139 helicopter and our dedicated and highly-skilled personnel.