

TraumaNet



HB 1439
Support with
Amendments

TO: The Honorable Benjamin S. Barnes, Chair
House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Zakk Arciaga, MSN, RN
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland Trauma Center Network [TraumaNet]

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TraumaNet supports with amendments **HB1439 – Public Health – Funding for Trauma Centers and Services**. We appreciate Delegate Shetty and her co-sponsors' commitment to support Maryland's ten designated trauma centers in delivering life-saving care and the best hope for return to health to our fellow Marylanders after injury that may occur any time of day or night.

TraumaNet is a multidisciplinary advocacy group focused on optimizing trauma care within Maryland with representation from each of Maryland's designated trauma centers and the three specialty centers for burn, eye and hand injuries. TraumaNet promotes excellence in trauma care by focusing on issues related to direct patient care, research, education, injury prevention and healthcare policy. TraumaNet partners with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems [MIEMSS] to create a collaborative statewide approach to trauma care.

In 2003, the Maryland General Assembly created the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund ('Trauma Fund') to support Maryland's trauma centers. In the subsequent 20 years, the adequacy of this investment had not been comprehensively reviewed. In 2023, TraumaNet supported the legislation that created the **Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland**. The Commission concluded that *"it is in the public's best interest to fund a trauma system that is in a perpetual state of readiness for the next injured person"* wherever in Maryland they may be.

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center ("Shock Trauma") anchors the Maryland trauma system and is recognized as a global leader in trauma care. As the state-designated Primary Adult Resource Center, Shock Trauma receives approximately 32% of its patients as transfers-in from other Maryland hospitals. In FY 2023, Shock Trauma treated 24% of Maryland's adult trauma patients. The majority of trauma care in Maryland occurs in the other trauma centers, in the regional and rural parts of the system, allowing patients to remain closer to their homes and families and also preserving Shock Trauma's resources for adult patients with the greatest need.

The Commission recognized that all of Maryland's trauma centers are under financial stress due to undercompensated costs to maintain trauma readiness. These costs vary considerably related to level of trauma center designation, patient volume and geographic location.

The Commission's recommendations include:

- To increase on-call payments for all eligible centers from the Trauma Fund to fund these readiness expenses more fully by increasing the rate to 60% of the percentage of reasonable compensation equivalents [RCE] hourly rate for the specialty.
- To give the Maryland Health Care Commission [MHCC] greater flexibility to award grants to trauma centers for purposes other than equipment purchases and to remove the 10% cap on trauma reserves that can be spent on grants.
- To direct the Health Services Cost Review Commission [HSCRC] to audit, standardize and annually report trauma readiness costs that are included in the hospital rate structure for all Maryland Trauma Centers and to include all standby costs for the four primary trauma specialties in hospital rates.
- To require MIEMSS and the Trauma Centers develop and report on trauma care quality measures to be accountable for the State's increased investment.

Dr. Thomas M. Scalea, Physician-in-Chief of the Shock Trauma Center, describes his institution as "*a gift from the people of Maryland to the people of Maryland.*" This is true of the entire Maryland trauma system that only exists to care for our fellow citizens at time of potential lifesaving and life-changing need. TraumaNet is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders in supporting trauma readiness and optimized outcomes for injured patients at any time and at all locations within Maryland.

TraumaNet supports HB1439 with amendments to reconcile the bill with the recommendations of the Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland.

cc: Members, Appropriations Committee