



Vehicle Registration- Emergency Medical System Surcharge- Increase and Distribution of Funds
Budget and Taxation Committee
Senator Guy Guzzone
February 29, 2024

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center is a core element of the State's Emergency Medical Services System and serves as the State's Primary Adult Resource Center (PARC) for the treatment of trauma. Specifically, the law mandates Shock Trauma to serve as (a) the State's primary adult trauma center, (b) the statewide referral center for the treatment of head, spinal and multiple trauma injuries, (c) the regional trauma center for Region III and the southwest quadrant of Baltimore City, and (d) the statewide referral center for patients in need of hyperbaric medical treatment.

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center is the State's only freestanding trauma hospital serving over 6,500 patients annually. It serves as a vital statewide clinical resource and uniquely maintains an around-the-clock state of readiness in its dedicated trauma resuscitation unit (TRU), operating rooms and recovery rooms. The facility and its staff are organized for on-demand access and treatment of the State's most critically ill and injured patients to a degree unparalleled anywhere in the system. The MIEMSS PARC designation represents the highest level of capability and readiness for the delivery of trauma care across the state of Maryland and the country. As a result, the Shock Trauma Center has unique operating and financial requirements that distinguish it from any other Maryland trauma center and are the basis for State operating support.

The Shock Trauma Center receives financial support from the State for operating and capital expenses. The Governor has included \$3.7 million in state operating support for Shock Trauma for fiscal year 2025 through MEMSOF. MEMSOF has been a cornerstone of this State's capability to provide every citizen a broad and uncompromised safety net. Keeping those entities that are a part of MEMSOF supported each year strengthens our ability to provide the highest level of care to Marylanders.

We are extremely grateful for the additional \$5 million that the legislators provided to supplement the Shock Trauma Center's stand-by cost for FY24. As well as, the \$9.5 million, that the legislators allocated to support the Maryland Trauma System of which the Shock Trauma Center has been earmarked \$1,221,910.

Despite these additional funds, the Shock Trauma Center continues to face unprecedented financial challenges related to inflation in the cost of dedicated staff, the cost of supplies, drugs and purchased services. While the HSCRC provides support in the rate structure for most of the cost of the care that we deliver, the unfunded portion is growing substantially. On the hospital side, the unfunded portion of the cost of inflation of salaries, supplies, drugs and services has risen considerably since 2018. In addition to that, despite substantial support from the hospital and net of the support already received from the trauma fund as it exists today, our faculty practice plans are operating at a deficit.



In order to grow to the capacity to consistently staff eight of the nine physical operating rooms that exist both in terms of nursing, anesthesia, supply and surgeon costs, we need to invest a substantial amount annually.

We should be investing more in prevention so that in the future the rate of injury to the population eventually decreases. We also need to invest more in our quality and education programs. None of that is currently funded through trauma rates or through support from the trauma fund.

These financial shortfalls are significant, and without substantial continued support, both the ability for our trauma system to continue to meet the needs of our citizens and to improve access to care for the most vulnerable among us will be in jeopardy.