

The Mobile Integrated Healthcare Subcommittee

A Subcommittee of the Statewide EMS Advisory Council for Maryland

Senate Bill 210

Emergency Medical Services – Paramedics – Immunization Administration – Effective Date

Position: Support

January 23, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East – Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

My name is Matthew Burgan, Chair of the Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) Subcommittee for the Statewide EMS Advisory Council, and on behalf of our committee, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 210, which aims to extend the approval for paramedics to administer COVID and influenza immunizations, as part of public health initiatives, to members of the various communities in our great state.

The role of paramedics in Maryland began to evolve in 2014 with the implementation of the first MIH and community paramedicine program in the state. Over the past decade this initiative has grown to include 13 EMS agencies and one commercial ambulance service in Maryland, with three more EMS agencies set to join in 2024. Many of these programs seek to address an increased demand for resources designed to respond to emergency medical calls for service. To better maintain availability of these limited, yet vital resources, MIH programs employ strategies based on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's "Triple Aim", including improving the health of the communities they serve, while lowering the total cost of care provided, and ultimately enhancing the patient's experience.

One such strategy includes the delivery of immunizations by EMS responders as part of public health initiatives conducted in Maryland. This was outlined in the 2020 planning document "Mobile Integrated Healthcare Standards Workgroup Vision for the Future" as approved by the Maryland EMS Board. The COVID-19 pandemic response served as a catalyst to accelerate the process of allowing EMS agencies and MIH Programs to deliver vaccinations in the community. The accomplishments achieved by Maryland's Paramedics since being provided the legislative authority to administer the COVID and influenza vaccines demonstrates that they can be administered efficiently, successfully, and safely. Furthermore, the response to the COVID pandemic and subsequent vaccination initiative prominently displayed the essential role that paramedics can play in enhancing public health outcomes when integrated in public health initiatives. This bill not only recognizes the competence and training of paramedics, but also addresses the pressing need for widespread immunization efforts that prioritize equal and equitable access to our state's fragile and oftentimes socioeconomically challenged residents.

Paramedics, as frontline healthcare clinicians, are uniquely positioned to reach these underserved populations and respond swiftly to community public health needs. By extending the authorization to administer immunizations as part of a public health initiative, we can significantly enhance our community's resilience against preventable diseases and protect our most vulnerable populations.

I urge you to consider the overwhelmingly positive impact that this bill can have on the health and well-being of all Marylanders. Your support for Senate Bill 210 will contribute to a more robust and responsive healthcare system, ensuring that we can better protect our residents from infectious diseases. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will champion the cause of public health by endorsing the extension of immunization approval for paramedics.

Respectfully,

Matthew A Burgan

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