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Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Chair*

Health Occupations and  
Long-Term Care Subcommittee

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Joint Committee on Administrative,  
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel Rosenberg  
Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee  
In Support of

**House Bill 51**

**Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund - Modifications**

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

In 2022 we established the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund. At that time we mandated that \$5,000,000 from the Governor's Annual Budget be appropriated each year towards pediatric cancer research, prevention, and treatment. This was a very optimistic goal, yet since that time we have found it impractical.

Funding prevention and treatment for pediatric cancer sounds like something everyone can agree with. Prevention entails teaching patients how to refrain from behaviors that can increase their risks of cancer. However, pediatric cancer doesn't result from children making poor health choices themselves. It often results from poor health decisions being made either for those children – completely outside of their control. Therefore, prevention is not an effective way to use these limited funds.

Treatment also seems like a worthy goal for this funding. However, we can't treat pediatric cancer if we aren't developing new treatments, and we are most definitely lacking treatments. People often say that pediatric cancer is too rare for us to devote larger amounts of

our budget to researching it. After hearing stories like those you will hear today, I believe this condition is far too common for the lack of research funding it receives.

In addition, the bill proposes a Commission to oversee the grant process, to ensure that the limited funding is being used as effectively as possible. The proposed Commission members represent key aspects of the research process and statewide infrastructure and will ensure that the proper focus and intent of the bill are realized.

Our goal, in the long run, is of course to research, prevent, and treat pediatric cancer to the best of our ability. However, it is important to keep the current focus on research for this disease that harms and kills children, and use the limited funds to create new medications to better treat it.

Therefore, I ask for your support today and request a FAVORABLE report for HB 51.

February 7, 2024