

Marylanders for Patient Rights

MARYLANDERS FOR PATIENT RIGHTS REQUESTS AN UNFAVORABLE REPORT ON HB784 Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times

Marylanders for Patient Rights is a leading advocacy group for patients in our state. We recommend an unfavorable report on HB784 for the following reasons:

1) The Task Force appears to be a continuation of a Work Group (WG) charged to the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA) by former Senator Griffin in 2023. I was one of 26 members of the WG. When the WG voted on a list of 27 recommendations generated by MHA contractor, only 4 WG members out of 26 voted in favor of continuing the WG. There was little support for continuation of the WG.

2) HB784 includes a clause about use of "an independent consultant to assess ... and implement MHA Throughput Work Group recommendations." The MHA, despite the support of a three member team of consultants, failed to deliver a final report on Jan. 1, 2024 as per the charge letter. As of this writing, a draft final report is still unavailable to WG members.

3) The 2023 WG suffered from its large size and broad remit. The composition of the WG was heavily weighted with senior hospital executives, some of whom were not recently active in the ED, while frontline ED workers were poorly represented. Almost 90% of ED patients are discharged from the ED and do not become a part of the overall hospital system, yet the focus was on overall hospital issues rather than shining a light on the ED itself.

4) None of the recommendations listed by the MHA consultant would have an impact on reducing wait time in the near term (within 3 years). Meanwhile, emergency patients are now reporting waits as long as 19 hours in severe pain, and they need some relief from the lengthy and dangerous waits. Understaffing in the ED is huge problem, yet one that was not addressed in the WG.

Net, HB784 is proposing to continue an approach that has been unsuccessful, and it is very unlikely to lead to actionable solutions to the pressing ED wait time issue. Please provide an unfavorable report on HB784.

Thank you,

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