

To: The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee

From: Dr. Bernadette Crowder
Neonatologist, Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

Date: March 25, 2025

Re: HB1301: Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program,
and Health Insurance – Transfers to Special Pediatric Hospitals – Prior Authorizations

My name is Dr. Bernadette Crowder, and I am a Neonatologist at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, requesting a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB1301**.

From the perspective of the baby

Imagine the busy ICU. Monitors beeping. Alarms sounding. People racing to the patient in distress. New babies arriving unexpectedly. Procedures needed STAT. All hands on deck. In the beginning, I was the patient who had all the attention. I was born at 24 weeks. I weighed 500 grams (that's the size of a coke bottle). I needed help breathing, my heartbeat was irregular, my temperature was unstable, my skin could not protect me. But they got me past that point. Now I'm working on feeding. I'm working on growing. These things take time I know, but no one comes to spend time with me. At least not more than the obligatory times per day where they make sure there are no unexpected change. So I lay in my room and wait. Wait for a visitor. Wait for a therapist. But I'm ready to do more. I'm ready to start preparing for life outside of this place.

There is a place I can go where people are happy to help me. You see, over here, the squeaky wheel gets the oil. At this new place, Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital, all of the kids get the attention they need. It's the bridge to home. There, I am a priority. Nurses do my cares, and additionally others come to make sure that I practice eating my mouth, and I have appropriate developmental stimulation. They read to me, they give me space to do tummy time. My parents can come and learn how to care for me. I no longer have to stay in a confined space. If I'm old enough, they'll take me to the playroom where I have additional simulations. There are lights and sounds. I can touch new textures. I can hold a rattle... and maybe shake it. There's a big furry animal that let's me lay on him (our facility dogs). I'm not stuck in one room. I'm not stuck by myself. I'm allowed to be challenged like a baby. But if I'm sick, they can still take care of me and they know if I need to go back to the other place

From the doctor

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital is the ideal facility for children to transition from ICU care to home. We are able to provide medical support, education to families and empowerment to parents who are bringing home children who may have had significant illness or injury. Wasting days in the ICU when they are no longer ICU status delays progress and impedes an efficient transition to home.

The same is true for the child whose life was interrupted by the fatal car accident that they survived, that house fire, the near drowning, the gunshot, or the sudden cardiac collapse while playing the sport that was going to make them famous. They are now on the mend and really for reentry into the world.

I share these illustrations to show why it is so important to remove barriers to transferring these young people in our hospital where they can get the care they need. I request a favorable report on HB1301.