



Maryland
Hospital Association

**House Bill 1564 – Public Health- Emergency Evaluations- Duties of Peace Officers and
Emergency Facilities**

Position: *Support*
March 17, 2020
Senate Finance Committee

MHA Position

Maryland's 61 nonprofit hospitals and health systems care for millions of people each year, treating 2.3 million in emergency departments and delivering more than 67,000 babies. The 108,000 people they employ are [caring for Maryland](#) around-the-clock every day.

Hospitals are places of healing and safety for patients, caregivers and visitors. However, they are not immune from violence in our communities. That is why Maryland's hospital leaders elevated workplace violence prevention in their strategic plan for the field. Violence takes a toll on individuals and communities. When that violence extends into the workplace, it can cause higher staff turnover, lost productivity, absenteeism, poor employee morale, and burnout.

The rate of serious workplace violence incidents is four times greater in the health care field than in private industry. While this violence can take many forms, often it is instigated by patients against health care staff. In 2018, MHA and the Maryland Nurses Association formed the Workplace Violence Prevention Steering Committee to make hospitals safer for patients and staff.

A recent MHA survey, conducted in partnership with the steering committee, found hospitals need more resources and tools to address workplace violence. House Bill 1564 would expand an important tool to keep hospital caregivers safe—expanding the types of health care professionals who can request a peace officer remain with a potentially violent patient after a patient is brought to the emergency department by the officer. This legislation recognizes the important role of physicians assistants, nurse practitioners and other advance practice professionals in emergency departments today. Empowering these professionals with the tools necessary to keep themselves and other staff safe is a critical component in improving the safety of health care facilities.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report

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