



Maryland  
Hospital Association

February 3, 2021

To: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 114 - Maryland Transit Administration - Funding (Transit Safety and Investment Act)

Dear Chair McIntosh:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 114.

The Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA), part of the state's Department of Transportation (MDOT), is used by more than 2.2 million people. To maintain these vital systems, MTA's Capital Needs Inventory Report states investment in "the state of good repair of these assets and system enhancements is critical for MDOT MTA to deliver safe, efficient, reliable, and customer-focused services."<sup>1</sup>

HB 114 would meet this need by requiring an appropriation for the "state of good repair needs" for MTA for fiscal years 2023-2028. Adequately funding MTA will ensure the state's transportation infrastructure is maintained and that Marylanders have access to an efficient, reliable, safe, and equitably funded regional transportation system.

Access to reliable transportation is not equally distributed throughout the state. This inequity disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color. One-third of low-income African Americans live in a zero-vehicle household, according to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Lack of access to a car can harm an individual's access to jobs, education, healthy food, and more.<sup>2</sup> For Marylanders who use public transportation, it is essential that the infrastructure is maintained and reliable.

Maryland hospitals, among the state's largest employers, witnessed how crucial public transportation is during the COVID-19 pandemic. At one hospital, a third of their dietary staff missed work when a single bus line was closed after a driver tested positive for COVID. These essential workers depend on MTA's services to get to work each day.

Patients frequently reference lack of transportation as a barrier to getting medical care they need. Out of necessity, hospitals across the state use creative strategies to help patients overcome

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transit Administration. (July 2019). "[10 Year Capital Needs Inventory and Prioritization](#)."

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Inc. (September 2020). "[New Routes to Equity: The Future of Transportation in the Black Community](#)."

barriers to care by partnering with ride-sharing services and creating mobile clinics.<sup>3,4</sup> However, these efforts were put in place to fill the need for reliable, public transportation in communities across the state.

On behalf of Maryland's health care heroes and the patients they serve, we ask for a favorable report on HB 114.

For more information, please contact:  
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<sup>3</sup> Uber Health. (October 3, 2019). "[MedStar Moves Care Forward with Reliable Appointment Transportation.](#)"

<sup>4</sup> American Hospital Association. (January 5, 2018). "[Case Study: CalvertHealth Medical Center's Efforts to Address Transportation Barriers and Improve Access.](#)"