



UPMC Western Maryland

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February 19, 2021

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB0803 – Economic Development – Western Maryland Economic Future Investment Board and Fund - Establishment

Dear Chair Guzzone:

On behalf of the nearly 2,200 employees at UPMC Western Maryland, we applaud Senators Edwards and Corderman for sponsoring legislation aimed at improving the economic conditions in Western Maryland.

At one time UPMC Western Maryland, formerly Western Maryland Health System, was one of several major employers in our region. During my 30-year career, I have witnessed the loss of thousands of good-paying jobs due to the closures of Kelly-Springfield Tire Company, PPG Industries, Biederlack, Bayliner and, most recently in 2019, the closure of the Verso paper mill. The loss of these jobs has not only negatively impacted families financially, this job loss has also affected their health and well-being as a result of losing their health benefits. While health insurance is not a pre-requisite to receiving medical attention, many individuals without insurance opt not to seek medical treatment, which often results in a diminished quality of life for those individuals.

In addition to providing opportunities for much-needed jobs and increased wages, this legislation will provide funding for other economic development projects for our region. As a rural hospital, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain physicians and other health care professionals because of our location. The improved economic conditions (e.g., infrastructure enhancements, new businesses, neighborhood revitalization, etc.) resulting from this legislation will be a tremendous asset in our recruitment efforts.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee give a **favorable report** to SB0803. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michele R. Martz
President

cc: B&T Committee Members
Senator George Edwards
Delegate Wendell Beitzel
Delegate Jason Buckel
Delegate Mike McKay
Nicole Fedeli, UPMC