



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 28, 2021

To: The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair, House Economic Matters Committee

Re: Letter of Concern- House Bill 124 - Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19

Dear Chair Davis:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 124. The bill requires Maryland's Labor & Industry Commissioner to adopt a permanent occupational safety and health standard that would be outdated and inconsistent with the latest guidance to protect employees from aerosol transmissible diseases, such as COVID-19.

Maryland hospitals, as places of health and healing, make significant efforts to protect their workforce and patients from exposure to communicable diseases and workplace hazards. While we appreciate the intent of HB 124, we are concerned that codified requirements in statute would create requirements out of step with the most up-to-date science, particularly on novel diseases such as COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regularly updates guidance based on the latest research. Several provisions of this bill are already outdated due to new CDC guidance related to COVID-19.

The science behind this novel virus consistently changes as experts learn more about how and when it spreads. CDC guidance changes frequently, and this bill could inadvertently cause state law to conflict with direction from national and state experts. President Joe Biden also issued an executive order requiring the federal Department of Labor to revise guidelines to protect employees and enforce worker health and safety requirements—potentially putting state law and federal law in conflict.

We appreciate your taking these concerns into consideration for HB 124.

For more information, please contact:
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