



TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 17, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 658 – *Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Establishment and Transfer of Maryland 9-1-1 Board*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support with amendment** for Senate Bill 658.

Senate Bill 658 establishes the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. The legislation essentially moves the current Maryland Emergency Management Agency, which resides in the Military Department, and raises its profile and authority by establishing it as an independent Department whose sole purpose is the focus of Emergency Management. The bill also transfers the 9-1-1 Board from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to the newly established Department of Emergency Management. Emergency Management is a broad term which includes a wide range of activities, issues, planning frameworks, and response constructs. It is a critical component of the State's ability to ensure a vibrant, strong, and responsive framework for responding to emergencies, whether they be triggered by weather, health, violence, or other contributing factors that require a coordinated and effective response.

MDAAP supports strengthening and prioritizing emergency management and believes the creation of a Department is a notable step in that direction. MDAAP also supports the movement of the Maryland 9-1-1 Board to the Department of Emergency Management. MDAAP would, however, like to raise an ongoing concern they have about the current emergency management and disaster preparedness framework that should be definitively addressed under the construct of a new Department. Disaster response and emergency management, as it relates to pediatrics, requires specific and focused consideration in all planning and program development initiatives. Currently, there is not a clear directive or framework for ensuring that there is a pediatric component incorporated into all planning efforts. MDAAP would request that Senate Bill 658 be amended to include a specific directive for the creation of a program for pediatric disaster preparedness and emergency management within the Department. This objective could be done through an amendment that creates the Office of Pediatric Emergency Management within the Department or it could be a directive that the newly created Department work with relevant stakeholders to study the creation of a pediatric emergency management office or division within the Department with an obligation to report back its findings and recommendations. With its amendment noted, MDAAP requests a favorable report.

For more information call:

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