



Hospice & Palliative Care Network
OF MARYLAND

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
410-244-7000

DATE: February 25, 2021

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 579 – *Health Care Facilities – Restrooms – Requirements*

On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services, and the Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland, we respectfully oppose Senate Bill 579, which requires that a health care facility, by January 1, 2023, to provide a “hands-free disposable towel dispenser and a device that allows an individual to open the door to exit the restroom without touching the door handle.” In addition, before January 1, 2023, a health care facility must report to the Maryland Department of Health on the total number of restrooms it maintains and its status and ability to comply with this requirement.

While we understand that the intent of the legislation is to reduce the spreading of germs, we believe that this bill goes too far and imposes an unnecessary burden on health care facilities that continue to struggle with the impact, both financial and administrative, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to point out that health care facilities currently follow procedures to reduce the spread of infectious disease set forth by the Centers for Disease Control, which does not contain these requirements. In addition, the bill language is vague in that it does not specify the device that needs to be used to “exit the restroom.” Does this mean an electric device, a device to open by foot, a hook to allow an individual to open by the elbow? Each poses its own challenge, especially considering the population that is cared for by a health care facility. There are other ways to reduce the spread of germs when leaving a restroom, including using a paper towel to open the door.

Health care facilities have gone to great lengths to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, which for some health care facilities, is confirmed through regular infection control surveys. For these reasons, the above-referenced associations respectfully request an unfavorable vote.