

**House Bill 390**  
**University of Maryland — Harford Memorial Hospital Closure — Economic  
Impact Study**  
**UM Upper Chesapeake Health**  
**Written Testimony**

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee  
January 19, 2021

Madam Chair and Members of the HGO Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this bill. The University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health (UM UCH) opposes HB 390 for several reasons. This bill has been presented previously. As was the case previously, this bill is not necessary and focuses on a local matter. Moreover, under state law that this Committee worked hard to put in place, a series of steps must be taken under the auspices of the MHCC, and have been followed in this instance, when an acute general hospital converts to a freestanding medical facility (FMF). It is the planned conversion of Harford Memorial Hospital (Harford Memorial Hospital — UM HMH) to an FMF that underlies this bill.

UM UCH has been planning for the transformation health care in Harford County for several years. The project is called "Your Health. Our Mission" (YHOM) and includes the development of a new, modern medical campus in Aberdeen, MD. It requires the conversion the current acute care hospital to a modernized, freestanding medical facility in a new location. This re-location provides two key benefits. First, it provides easier health care access to residents on the eastern portion of Harford County. Second, it will allow UM UCH to close an aged, obsolete facility that cannot be cost-effectively renovated to meet the ever changing technology advancements available in the industry. This replacement facility will be state of the art, and along with its sister facility, UM Upper Chesapeake Medical Center (UM UCMC) in Bel Air, a full service community acute care hospital 14 miles away, and it will support the needs of modern healthcare delivery in our service area.

In addition to the transition of UM HMH, YHOM plans include the development of a special psychiatric hospital (as part of a Behavioral Health Pavilion) also on the Aberdeen campus. The Behavioral Health Pavilion will serve the inpatient mental health needs of our community as well as expanded outpatient services that will help individuals transition through multiple stages of behavioral health treatment without having to move to multiple geographic locations to receive care. Our planned Behavioral Health Pavilion will serve individuals from young adults

(over age 18) to the senior population in need of mental health stabilization, treatment and ongoing counseling. Further, the Emergency Department services within the planned freestanding medical facility will include a dedicated area for individuals suffering from a behavioral health emergency. I believe the committee is extremely knowledgeable about the behavioral health crisis that exists in our state as well as in our country, for sufficient community-based mental health services.

Additional components of our YHOM plan include the expansion of acute care services at our Bel Air location at the UM Upper Chesapeake Medical Center campus, with the goal of continuing to regionalize health care services in the most appropriate, cost-efficient manner while delivering the highest quality of care, as well as the expansion of outpatient services at both the Bel Air and Aberdeen campuses.

Despite, UM UCH having conducted a very public information process focusing on several requisites: employee displacement, subsequent disposition of the property, etc., as required by state law and within the purview of the MHCC, a few individuals have raised some concerns over the impact of the closure of Harford Memorial. UM UCH leadership and our community hospital Board have been, and will continue to be, committed to working collaboratively with the city of Havre de Grace as well as community representatives in our Community Relations Council with regard to the future re-use of the current UM HMH property.

With that focus in mind, UM UCH engaged Cushman Wakefield to complete a preliminary UM Harford Memorial Hospital Re-Use study and has begun conversations with the Department of Housing and Community Development leadership to better understand the opportunity zone opportunities that exist in the Havre de Grace area. UM UCH maintains a strong commitment to, and dialogue with, the community. The economic impact study objective of this bill is redundant with the process and planning that has already occurred.

Representatives from Cushman & Wakefield, and the Department of Housing and Community Development have met with the City of Havre de Grace leadership to discuss the redevelopment of the Harford Memorial Hospital site and the benefits to the City of Havre de Grace. Representatives from Cushman & Wakefield have recently met with both of the bill sponsors regarding the same discussion. Active conversations continue with the City of Havre de Grace leadership about this unique development opportunity.

As a component of both the Maryland Health Care Commission Certificate of Exemption process, which was pursued completely, and from a standard business practice modeling perspective, UM UCH has and will continue to oversee the transition of its team members currently working at UM HMH to all available positions both locally within the UM UCH facilities as well as within the UMMS. UM UCH remains 100% committed to our team members as we transition our facilities as well as our overall care delivery model.

Lastly, and respectfully, UM UCH submits it is the hospital's community Board's responsibility to examine the costs and benefits of relocation to the new facility. This bill suggests that the UM Institute for Governmental Service and Research should make these determinations. Indeed, the UM UCH Board executed these responsibilities and determined for myriad reasons that both the conversion and the physical move were best from a cost benefit analysis.

For these specific reasons, UM UCH leadership and Board of Directors, urge oppose HB 390.

Submitted By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyle E. Sheldon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lyle E. Sheldon FACHE  
President/Chief Executive Officer  
UM Upper Chesapeake Health