



820 West Diamond Avenue, Suite 600
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
www.AdventistHealthCare.com

February 2, 2021

To: The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Adventist HealthCare
Re: SB311 – Maryland Health Care Heroes Protection Act

POSITION: SUPPORT

Adventist HealthCare’s hospitals, providers and staff have served on the front lines for nearly a year, caring for our patients and our communities, in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

The teams at Shady Grove Medical Center, White Oak Medical Center and Fort Washington Medical Center, all had to immediately and continuously adapt to the unprecedented demands of the pandemic response, as well as, countless federal and state orders and directives impacting our operations. Adapting to these extraordinary and everchanging circumstances has caused potential legal vulnerabilities for our health care system and employees.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on all aspects of the health care delivery system. The scope of the response required to meet the demands of the pandemic, especially in the days of the initial surge, impacted care delivery throughout our hospitals. All hospital personnel were called on to adjust their routines and adapt to evolving federal and state guidelines. Combined with the extensive orders issued from the Maryland Department of Health, including the requirement to cease elective and non-urgent procedures for almost two months, all providers and patients, COVID and non-COVID alike, felt the impact of this public health emergency.

Existing liability protections in Maryland law need to be updated and clarified to reflect the unique challenges facing us right now. Maryland’s existing statute does not offer liability protections to all frontline health care workers, nor does it cover care delivered to non-COVID patients. These issues must be addressed to cover the entire impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. SB 311 does not create blanket immunity for hospitals and does not change the liability standard in current law. Instead, it updates already existing liability protections to address the extraordinary reach of this public health crisis.

Please support Maryland’s hospitals and front-line workers as we continue to deliver care and compassion in the face of this unprecedented crisis.

For these reasons, Adventist HealthCare supports SB311 and encourages the committee to give a **favorable report**.

