



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates
The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Maryland Senate
Honorable Members of the Maryland General Assembly

Dear Madam Speaker, Mr. President, and Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

We, the leaders of Maryland's 60 nonprofit hospitals and health systems, thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our health care heroes have been fighting on the front lines of this crisis for nearly a year, putting the duty to care for Marylanders first. **We urge you to update existing law that affords liability protections for health care facilities and providers during a state-declared catastrophic health emergency by passing HB 25/SB 311, the Maryland Health Care Heroes Protection Act.**

The pandemic places never before seen demands on health care workers and facilities. For months, providers have cared for Marylanders while facing difficult challenges related to personal protective equipment, testing capacity, and staff. Federal and state directives change often, and at times, conflict with each other. Ambiguity in crisis standards of care and rapidly changing public health guidance led hospitals to take unprecedented measures as they and their staff became a vital component of Maryland's COVID-19 recovery.

Unfortunately, many of the individuals and organizations being asked to take on these challenges are also having to confront the very real concern about individual and organizational liability. Plus, hospitals continue to face huge premium increases for reinsurance and a new "carve-out" by carriers for infectious diseases due to the pandemic's liability risks.

Updating the liability protections for those disproportionately sharing the burden in fighting the pandemic is essential. Maryland's existing statute was passed after Sept. 11, 2001 due to bioterrorism concerns. It did not consider what our health care system would experience during a public health crisis like COVID-19. In 2020, more than half of all states acknowledged these unique challenges by enacting liability protections for health care providers and facilities during this pandemic. Maryland must join their ranks and take this sensible step.

Our mission is to care for our communities and to save lives of Marylanders. We ask you, please, to support our health care heroes.

Respectfully,

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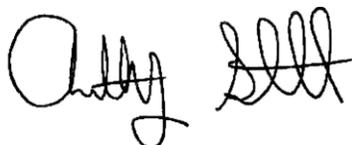
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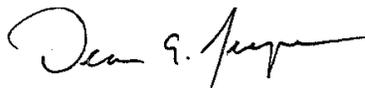
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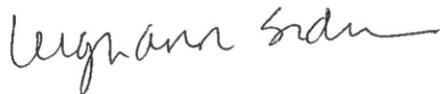
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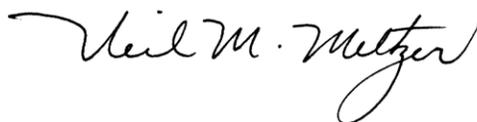
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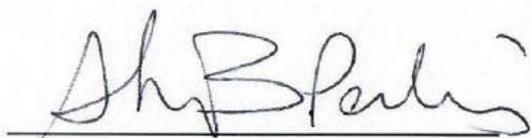
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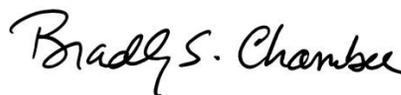
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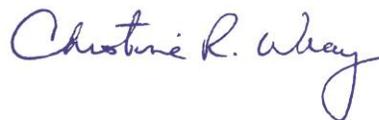
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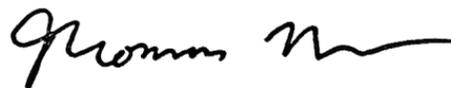
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