

February 16, 2022

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Senate Bill 591 - Support

Dear Chairman Kelley;

The Maryland Patient Safety Center, Inc. (“MPSC” or “The Center”) and our Board are pleased to express strong support for **Senate Bill 591- Maryland Health Care Commission – Patient Safety Center – Designation and Fund**. We respectfully urge your favorable consideration.

The bill will provide greatly needed ongoing funding for Maryland’s designated patient safety center to allow for continuation and expansion of its mission to improve quality and outcomes across Maryland’s health care continuum. The Center’s mission and programs are more vital now than they have ever been as the Maryland health care industry faces a workforce crisis and many more challenges created by the pandemic.

Health equity is now among the Center’s key priorities for the immediate future. Sustained resources will allow us to ensure we can assist patients, hospitals, nursing homes, health care providers and other health care facilities pursue and maximize their patient safety efforts, which will result in reduced costs and improved quality of care to patients across the State. This becomes increasingly vital in order to maintain Maryland’s unique system of payment for healthcare under the Federal Medicare Waiver.

Pursuant to legislation, the Maryland Health Care Commission (“MHCC”) has been designating the patient safety center for the State since 2004, and The Maryland Patient Safety Center, Inc. has been the designee from the beginning. Therefore, the designation process outlined in SB 510 codifies and clarifies MHCC’s existing practice.

MPSC, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization and is one of the first 25 organizations in the nation to be listed as a Patient Safety Organization (PSO) by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The Center is recognized as a national leader in patient safety. As a model of patient safety innovation and implementation, we convene providers, patients, and families across the healthcare continuum to prevent avoidable harm and provide safe and equitable healthcare for all.

MPSC’s key initiatives over the years have included:

- Caring for the Caregiver – In conjunction with the Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality at Johns Hopkins Medicine, this program is focused on peer support,

resiliency, and the emotional well-being of the health care workforce. It provides immediate, confidential psychological first aid and emotional support to healthcare staff, the “second victims” following work-related traumatic events in hospitals across Maryland and throughout the country.

- Health Equity – Due to significant disparities in outcomes for pregnant black women in Maryland, the Center and the Maryland Hospital Association have created the Maternal Health Equity Project to educate and develop resources for non-obstetric providers on maternal morbidity, racial bias, and the value of the patient’s voice and experience. The Center has also facilitated education regarding COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in communities and healthcare staff of color.
- Improving Sepsis Survival- This program resulted in increased sepsis survival rates in two Collaborative cohorts through early identification and rapid initiation of treatment.
- Facility Acquired Infections– Through the Center’s Clean Collaboratives, hospitals and nursing homes across the state have reduced facility-acquired infections.
- Cesarean Sections – A state-wide collaborative has reduced primary (first-time) C-Section rates.
- Falls – A collaborative has reduced injuries related to falls in long-term care facilities.
- Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome – A collaborative decreased lengths of stay and hospital transfers (and cost) for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome.
- Hospital Hand Hygiene- Through the only statewide collaborative effort in hospitals, this program resulted in increased hand hygiene compliance by healthcare providers

Many of the Center’s accomplishments thus far have resulted from the ability to convene and educate partners through smaller collaboratives targeted at specific patient safety issues and annual conferences reaching a larger set of consumers, providers, and facilities.

All of this takes money and resources. Over our first 10 years, the Health Services Cost Review Commission provided “seed funding” for the Center to launch and expand operations and, as such, had gradually reduced the amount over time. Those “seed funded” resources have now expired. As for all temporary grants of the Commission, providing such funding on a long-term basis will increase hospital rates over time and could negatively impact the Total Cost of Care metrics that the State is required to meet with the Federal government to retain Maryland’s unique All-Payer System. So, a new funding source is necessary for MPSC to remain committed to the priorities of both the Center and the State, as shown above.

The Center's annual budget is approximately \$1.7 million in FY22, down from \$1.9 million in FY21. Other revenue sources include membership dues, fees for educational programming, and restricted grants. A stable revenue source will allow us to continue to make progress on the priorities of the Center and those of the State and allow the Center to begin work on other important and valuable initiatives that will be designed to improve patient and health care worker safety and well-being, health equity, and quality of care across the State.

Thank you for this opportunity to support this very important legislation and I am always available to you if you wish to learn more about the MPSC.

Sincerely,



Blair M. Eig, MD, MBA, MA
President & CEO
Maryland Patient Safety Center