

Kirsten Neumann
494 Eleanor Ln.
Arnold, MD 21012
klvneumann@gmail.com

SB633: Next Generation 9-1-1 Commission Omnibus Legislation
Senate Finance Committee | March 8, 2022

Chair Kelley and Vice Chair Feldman:

Thank you for allowing me to share our story today.

My name is Kirsten Neumann and this is my daughter Vivian Neumann, she is 4 years old. I am here today because of our recent negative, almost deadly experience with 911 emergency services. In order to give you some perspective, I need to share with you a brief synopsis of Vivian's medical history. Vivian was diagnosed with stage 4 neuroblastoma in 2019 and spent 2 years undergoing chemotherapy, multiple surgeries, radiation, and immunotherapy. In January 2021 she was pronounced cancer free. This past year, she has been participating in a clinical trial out of Memorial Sloan Kettering in NY in hopes that it will vaccinate her body against the cancer. The clinical trial includes a series of shots that create temporary flu like symptoms including fever. Vivian received her final shot on February 15th, and we were cleared to drive home that evening. The following day, she developed a low-grade fever, which was expected, and lasted throughout the day. Around 3pm she suddenly stopped breathing, her face began turning blue, and she started to seize. I grabbed my phone and dialed 911. I was greeted with the following message, "I'm sorry, we are experiencing high call volume, please hold." I was then put on hold, while my daughter continued to seize and then it disconnected. This happened twice. From the time of my first phone call, 5 full minutes passed before 911 called back. By this time, our babysitter had reached a dispatcher. Unfortunately, it still took another 15 minutes for an ambulance to reach our house. My daughter was barely breathing and seizing for 20 minutes. As you can see, Vivian is okay, and her oncologists believe she had a complex febrile seizure. However, we are very lucky she does not have any lasting neurological damage considering the amount of time it took for an ambulance to arrive.

I have subsequently learned that our county, with a population of almost 600,000 people, has only 6 dispatchers when fully staffed. Also, when fire or ambulance is needed, the call is sent to another center with fewer dispatchers. These people are working 12-hour shifts, with no mental health support, are under-paid, and burn out quickly. Anne Arundel County is one of the few counties in the state without a consolidated call center.

I am asking you to please support SB633 so we can begin to seriously upgrade our 911 emergency services. This is literally a life-or-death situation for every resident of our county. Thank you.