
SB 591
Support

TO: The Honorable Delores Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Allen Kachalia, M.D., J.D.
Director, Armstrong Institute for Public Safety and Quality
Senior Vice President for Patient Safety and Quality, Johns Hopkins Medicine

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Johns Hopkins strongly supports **SB 591 – Maryland Health Care Commission – Patient Safety Center – Designation and Fund**. This bill will provide necessary 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. Patient safety remains a critically important issue, and Johns Hopkins strongly supports initiatives that aim to improve patient safety across Maryland. A recent article led by authors at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid has further highlighted how the pandemic has heightened the need to improve patient safety.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated that successful collaborations lead to important results. For example, the Patient Safety Center partners with Johns Hopkins Medicine, through the Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality, through its Caring for the Caregiver program: the RISE program. The Armstrong Institute provides an infrastructure that oversees, coordinates, and supports patient safety and quality efforts across the Johns Hopkins’ integrated health care system. The mission is to eliminate patient harm, achieve best patient outcomes at the lowest possible cost and share that knowledge through research and trainings. The institute further develops and delivers training programs and other educational resources that increase the ability of Johns Hopkins’ providers to carry out work that prevents efforts and complications, improves patient outcomes, and enhances value.

The Caring for Caregiver Program guides hospitals to set up peer-respond programs that deliver “psychological first aid and emotional support” to health care professionals following difficult events. This program is modeled on the Resilience in Stressful Events (RISE) team at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, which prepares employees to provide skilled, nonjudgment, and confidential support to individuals and groups. This training is offered by the Armstrong Institute in conjunction with the Maryland Patient Safety Center, catalyzing the spread of important safety work started right here in Maryland.

¹ Fleisher LA, Schreiber M, Cardo D, Srinivasan A. Health Care Safety during the Pandemic and Beyond — Building a System That Ensures Resilience. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2022; Available at: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2118285>

Government and Community Affairs

Johns Hopkins underscores the importance of this legislation. Now more than ever the Center's mission and programs are vital, particularly as the health care industry faces a workforce crisis and additional challenges both created and exacerbated by the pandemic. Johns Hopkins urges a **favorable report on SB 591**.