



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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March 3, 2022

Bill: HB 1243 Rural Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program
Committee: Health and Government Operations
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass, Vice Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk, and Members:

It is our sincere pleasure to support passage of HB 1243 Rural Non-emergency Medical Transportation that will establish a Statewide Rural Non-Emergency Health Transportation program.

As a member of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD), we recognize the significant transportation needs faced by some members in rural areas of our community that TCCSMD works hard to address. Since August 2018, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has sponsored the Wheels to Wellness program that coordinates transportation for patients identified by hospital care coordinators who require transportation help. The following findings provide compelling reasons to support the legislation:

- Our residents in rural areas of the County seek healthcare services in our urban centers for specialized care. For these patients, regular transportation is challenging for local destinations and nearly impossible for destinations outside the region.
- Prior to initiating rides, TCCSMD determined there would be a Return on Investment of at least \$6.30 for each dollar invested.
- The legislation supports temporary transportation for up to 120 days. We believe this time frame will have the largest positive impact for our patients while minimizing expense. Our hospitals determined that Wheels to Wellness made the most significant impact for patients who were enrolled in the program for the first four months. For example, during the FY2020, our hospital partners determined there was a 68% reduction for these patients pre/post costs.
- Programs offered by TCCSMD stabilizes employment for human service transportation providers while ensuring patients maintain good healthcare maintenance regimes.
- The State Health Service Cost Review Commission established penalties and rewards for hospital readmission rates. The transportation services will help hospitals attain lower readmission rates while ensuring patients meet with their physician for follow up office visits.

We encourage a favorable committee report on HB 1423. Thank you the opportunity to provide our full support.

Sincerely,

County Commissioners of Charles County
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President

cc: Charles County Delegation