

Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill #: HB1358, Health - Protection of Personal Medical Information
Hearing Date: March 14, 2022
****[SUPPORT]****

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk and Health and Government Operations Committee Members,

I am writing in **SUPPORT** of **Bill #: HB1358, Bill Title: Health - Protection of Personal Medical Information** that would mandate protections concerning the confidentiality of personal medical information for all residents in the state of Maryland. There would also be clear specifications about violations to the bill in which unauthorized parties tried to access patient health material.

As a patient stakeholder in the healthcare system, I often have apprehension about speaking to my practitioner regarding delicate medical issues because of the vulnerable position I am placed in during appointments. HB1358 would promote trusting environments where individuals would feel comfortable with seeking care and being as open as possible throughout a care visit. This bill is also encouraging to me because it enhances my willingness to seek medical care sooner to avoid more intensive treatment from worsened health.

HB1358 impacts everyone in the state of Maryland because medical information contains sensitive material about an individual. This information should thereby be observed only by approved parties. Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Privacy Rule provision was enacted in 2002 which secured the confidentiality of patients and their healthcare information. All patients consequently have assurances from the government that health organizations will keep their personal medical information safe from unauthorized individuals. This bill is also important in maintaining the integrity of patient-provider relationships in the long run.

In establishing directives to keep personal Maryland residents' medical information secure, patients will develop stronger bonds with their providers and become more empowered to make major decisions regarding their health.

For the reasons stated above, I strongly urge this committee to vote **FAVORABLY** on **Bill #: HB1358, Bill Title: Health - Protection of Personal Medical Information**.

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria Oji