



January 19, 2022

**House Bill 44**

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program -  
Emergency Service Transporters -  
Reimbursement  
Health and Government Operations Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

House Bill 44 proposes modernizing the Medicaid reimbursement scheme for emergency service care and transportation. With the amendments offered by the bill sponsor, this bill will realign Maryland's definition of care and compensation to reimburse locally funded emergency service providers for care provided, under a more realistic set of circumstances than currently reflected.

Maryland's current Medicaid reimbursement rate for emergency medical services has remained at \$100 since 1999. HB 44 gradually increases this rate to at least \$300, which is closer to the actual cost of these services. HB 44 also requires Medicaid reimbursement for patients who are treated but not transported, thereby recognizing that much of emergency care is provided by trained ambulance staff, regardless of whether a delivery is ultimately needed. The need for these changes is especially acute now, in the midst of the ongoing battle against COVID-19, which has strained our medical system.

The proposed amendments for HB 44 also incentivize innovative programs and services, such as Anne Arundel County's Mobile Integrated Community Health (MICH) program. MICH is a partnership between the county Fire Department, Department of Aging and Disabilities, Baltimore Washington Medical Center (BWMC), and Anne Arundel Medical Center. The program identifies frequent 9-1-1 callers for non-life-threatening medical reasons and links them to resources and programs to improve overall health and living conditions and reduce the strain on emergency medical systems and local hospital emergency rooms. Since full implementation in 2020, the program has resulted in a 70% decrease in 9-1-1 calls from participants in the three months after intervention. BWMC has also seen more than a 30% reduction in emergency room visits from MICH participants.

HB 44 takes long overdue steps to modernize the Maryland Medicaid system of compensating emergency care. For these reasons, Anne Arundel County requests a **FAVORABLE** report, with amendments, on HB 44.