



2022 SESSION
POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 591
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Support

TITLE: SB 591 – Maryland Health Care Commission - Patient Safety Center - Designation and Fund

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Bill 591 (SB 591) requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to designate a center as the Patient Safety Center for the State on or before December 31, 2025. The bill also requires the Center to develop, coordinate, and implement patient safety initiatives across the State, be a model for innovation and implementation, convene health care providers, patients, and families to improve the quality of health care and share information on best practices. The bill establishes the Patient Safety Center Fund as a special non-lapsing fund to subsidize a portion of the costs of the Center.

POSITION AND RATIONALE

The Maryland Health Care Commission supports SB 591.

The Maryland Patient Safety Center, Inc. (MPSC) was first designated by the MHCC as Maryland's patient safety center in 2004 and has held this designation to the present day. Recognized as a leader in patient safety the MPSC is a not-for-profit corporation and was one of the first 25 patient safety centers recognized as a Patient Safety Organization by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

MPSC goal is to make health care in Maryland the safest in the nation by fostering a shared culture of safety among patient care providers. MPSC approach combines limited mandatory reporting of serious adverse events to the Maryland Department of Health and encourages voluntary reporting of other patient safety events. The Center develops and offers education and training on quality and facilitates patient safety collaboratives across hospitals and other health care facilities in Maryland.

The MHCC recognizes the value of a coordinated statewide approach to improve health care quality and prevent medical errors. To that end, we felt the MPSC is well positioned to play a leadership role in our State given their ongoing evidence-based programs and strong

partnerships with hospital and non-hospital providers. In 2020, the MHCC redesignated the MPSC, Inc. for another 5-year period until December 31, 2025.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2019 has dramatized the importance of a patient safety center. Despite a modest budget, the MPSC has risen to the challenge. Early in the pandemic, MPSC established broad and specific COVID-19 initiatives including developing innovative training in response to transformation in care wrought by telehealth, identifying care needs of the long haul COVID patient, and important efforts that refocused safety and quality efforts through a prism of health equity. Longstanding MPSC programs on caring for the caregiver were further expanded as recognition grew on the enormous stresses caregivers faced as the health care system was hit by repeated COVID-19 surges.

Senate Bill 591 establishes ongoing funding for the MPSC that will support its mission and programs to improve quality and outcomes across Maryland’s health care spectrum. For the past ten years, the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) provided funding through hospital rates to the MPSC for its program initiatives. This funding decreased over time and has now been phased out. The MPSC has raised funds through membership fees, fees for educational programs, and various grants. The creation of this special non-lapsing fund will provide a predictable source of funding that will enable the MPSC to continue its missions to facilitate and improve health care quality and patient safety.

Should the General Assembly pass and Governor sign SB 591, MHCC will be responsible for authorizing the release of funds to MPSC. The MHCC takes this responsibility seriously. MHCC is well-suited to assume this role given our long-standing efforts to establish a patient safety center and our responsibility to designate a patient safety center. MHCC receives reports on the MPSC, and a Commissioner is an active member of the MPSC Board of Directors.

MHCC believes patient safety is a critical state concern, the funding is appropriate, and our oversight offers assurance that funds will be spent wisely. For these reasons, MHCC asks for a favorable report on SB 591.

Note: The Maryland Health Care Commission is an independent State agency, and the position of the Commission may differ from the position of the Maryland Department of Health.

