



Bill: House Bill 1243 : Public Health – Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee:

The Transportation Association of Maryland is a 501(c)(3) organization representing 104+ member organizations consisting of locally operated transit agencies (LOTS), non-profit transit providers, transportation vendor and transportation supporters with 20,000+ individual members. TAM is the legislative voice and vigilant eyes and ears of the transportation industry in Maryland. TAM's mission is to strengthen community transportation in Maryland through advocacy and professional development.

The need for effective coordination between transit providers and hospitals is a long-overdue and a necessary part of the solution to provide non-emergency medical transportation. Missed appointments can lead to increased hospital visits and readmission rates. As exemplified in the Wheels to Wellness program in Southern Maryland, effective coordination causes lower overall costs and better health outcomes.

We appreciate Delegate Howard being available to discuss possible amendments and look forward to continuing that dialogue. That said, we respectfully recommend the following amendments:

1. Public Transit agencies should be specifically allowed to participate in this program, as local nonprofit organizations often do not possess the capacity to provide this service; and
2. Eligibility requirements should be altered to remove the provision requiring that eligible individuals not live within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a bus stop. This requirement, if unchanged, would effectively exclude transit agencies from effectively coordinating with hospitals to transport patients who reside within their service area.

These changes will permit more effective use of funds and enhance ongoing efforts to promote coordination between transit agencies, non-profits, and medical providers.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact John Duklewski at 410-553-4245 or jduklewski@taminc.org.

Sincerely,

John Duklewski
Executive Director, Transportation Association of Maryland