



City of
Salisbury
Jacob R. Day, Mayor

19 January 2022

Re: Favorable with Amendments support for HB 44 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Emergency Service Transporters – Reimbursement

Dear Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

As you consider the merits of **HB 44** and the proposed amendments to this vital piece of legislation, I ask that you vote to give **HB 44** a **Favorable with Amendments** Committee report.

If passed with amendments, HB 44 would increase the emergency transport reimbursement rate by \$25 each fiscal year until the EMS reimbursement rate is at least \$300. This EMS reimbursement rate increase is vital as our City currently forgoes much-needed funding due to the disparity in the Medicaid reimbursement rate, which often does not cover the cost of providing EMS services. In addition to increasing reimbursement rates, the amended bill would also provide reimbursements for services provided through a community-based mobile integrated health service.

Here in Salisbury, our Salisbury Wicomico Integrated First Care Team (SWIFT) continues to make great strides in reducing non-emergent emergency department visits by working with individuals who frequently utilize EMS services and helping them to better manage their chronic conditions. In addition to providing preventative care, SWIFT patients are also connected with primary care services and other community resources. Thanks to the continued partnership between our Salisbury Fire Department, Wicomico County volunteer fire companies, and TidalHealth, our SWIFT program has enrolled over 170 patients. While local partnerships have allowed us to positively impact our community and reduce the volume of non-emergent 911 calls, the success of SWIFT has primarily relied upon grant funding.

If enacted, HB 44 will allow SWIFT and other mobile integrated healthcare services throughout Maryland to continue providing crucial community-based care. By enabling the growth of community-based care, in addition to reducing the burden on already strained hospital emergency departments, we will be empowering Marylanders to live healthier lives by offering preventative and primary care.

Considering the many benefits of HB 44, which will help cities such as Salisbury as we continue to meet the healthcare needs of our communities, I ask that you support HB 44 and pass the bill out of Committee with a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.

Respectfully,

Jacob R. Day
Mayor