



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 17, 2022

To: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Information - Senate Bill 559 - Estates and Trust - Supported Decision Making

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 559. The hospital field supports the intent of SB 559, to provide an alternative to guardianship, when possible, particularly for people with disabilities.

The guardianship process in Maryland can often be cumbersome and lengthy. Patients in acute care hospitals who require a surrogate decision maker may languish in the facility beyond medical necessity as they wait for judicial action on their guardianship petitions. The judiciary is studying ways to improve Maryland's guardianship process.

MHA supports attempts to improve the guardianship process and create alternatives when appropriate. For supported decision-making agreements to be effective, health care professionals and staff will need to understand their promise, limitations, and restrictions. Given this is a new concept in Maryland, the hospital field is prepared to work with stakeholders to ensure that an already unwieldy guardianship process is not further complicated.

We hope you find this information useful as you deliberate on SB 559.

For more information, please contact:
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