

March 27, 2023

On behalf of TidalHealth Peninsula Regional trauma center, this is written to express our strong **support** for Senate Bill 493 – Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland.

TidalHealth is the oldest, largest, and most complex healthcare system on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Founded in 1897, TidalHealth has hospitals in Maryland and Delaware, with 30 different sites of services and joint ventures across seven counties.

At TidalHealth's flagship hospital is located in Salisbury, and we provide complex services in a rural setting. In addition to being one of a handful of dedicated trauma providers, we are the only trauma center on Maryland's Eastern Shore. With that said, our trauma service is in jeopardy, and this bill is one avenue to ensure proper care remains for all of Maryland.

TidalHealth Peninsula Regional is the second busiest trauma center based on activations behind Shock Trauma. In the past four years, residents from every single one of Maryland's 24 counties were treated at our trauma center. In the summer, more than 8 million people visit the Shore. Accidents do happen, therefore trauma services at TidalHealth Peninsula Regional are not just an Eastern Shore concern; this should be on the radar for every single elected representative as their constituents have used our trauma center in Salisbury. It is greater than a two-hour ambulance drive to the nearest trauma center. This drive time will impact lives saved, disabilities, and access to timely care.

TidalHealth is advocating for proper trauma funding through several avenues, including SB 493. As you know, the trauma fund was developed during the 2003 legislative session as a mechanism to aid Maryland's trauma program. Since that time, a comprehensive review of the Maryland trauma system and the fund has not occurred — even as the needs of the system have grown and the cost of operating a trauma program has significantly increased. At TidalHealth, it costs more to run the trauma program than we receive from the fund. There is a significant delta.

At TidalHealth, we fully support SB 493 and encourage you to pass it. We want to ensure Maryland has the most contemporary trauma funding program, and this can only happen

through the establishment of a task force to study the adequacy of trauma funding across Maryland for operating, capital, and workforce costs.

The only trauma center on the Eastern Shore is in jeopardy and, without your support, residents across Maryland are at risk. We urge you to pass this bill, allowing us to continue our excellent care on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven Leonard".

Steven E. Leonard, PhD, MBA, FACHE
President/CEO
TidalHealth, Inc