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Executive Nominations Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 30, 2023

The House Appropriations Committee

SB 493 – Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the distinguished House Appropriations Committee for allowing me to present Senate Bill 493 – Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland. SB 493 was approved unanimously by the full Senate with all of the members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee cosponsoring the bill.

Senate Bill 493 would establish a task force to study the adequacy of trauma funding across Maryland for operating, capital, and workforce costs, which according to the fiscal note, can be managed with existing resources and has no State or local impact. Typically, hospitals do not have the ability to adequately manage all forms of traumatic injury or staff the required sub-specialists needed for such intensive care. When a hospital commits to being a trauma center, they are required by statute to be staffed and equipped to swiftly treat severe life-threatening conditions such as falls, motor vehicle crashes, or gunshot wounds and provide resuscitative care. Trauma surgeons, other specialists, and ancillary support staff are required to be in-house or on-call 24 hours a day in a trauma center. All of this means that trauma centers require significant resources to operate effectively.

For background, in 2003, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation that created the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund to aid Maryland's trauma system by reimbursing trauma physicians for uncompensated care losses and by raising Medicaid payments to 100% of the Medicare rate when a Medicaid patient receives trauma care at a designated trauma center. In the twenty years that have passed there has been no comprehensive review of this Fund despite the industry growing and evolving.

Unfortunately, the reason this legislation is before you is because we know the Fund is not as effective as it was intended to be. TidalHealth Peninsula Regional is the Eastern Shore's only trauma center and serves 500,000 residents and three million visitors each year, playing an integral part of Maryland Trauma Center System. It is critically underfunded. At last estimate, TidalHealth receives from the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund less than 10 percent of the total cost it requires to remain a trauma center. Many other trauma centers are experiencing similar funding challenges and it has been decades since this issue has been comprehensively studied.

This legislation is supported by the Maryland Health Care Commission, the Maryland Hospital Association, the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Institute for EMS Systems, the

University of Maryland Capital Region Health, Lifebridge Health, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Western Maryland, TraumaNet, the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission, TidalHealth Peninsula Regional, and Johns Hopkins.

The State of Maryland is home to ten trauma centers that provide vital, lifesaving care every day. A thorough review of the trauma system is needed. I truly appreciate your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully ask for a swift and favorable report on SB 493.