

Testimony of Valerie Devaris

In support of Senate Bill 387 - Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times

Senate Finance Committee

Feb. 23, 2023, at 1pm

I'm a resident of Annapolis and a Middle School teacher. I am testifying as a private citizen. I live with my family and my 92-year-old father. My father is a diabetic with leukemia and some memory loss. My recent experience with my father in the Emergency Room leads me to support Senate Bill 387.

My father broke his hip and was in extreme pain when he tried to walk. The orthopedist wanted to do surgery on Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023. Since there were no beds available for a direct admission to the hospital, the orthopedist told us to go to the Emergency Room.

On Friday, Jan. 6, 2023, we arrived at Luminis Anne Arundel Medical Center's Emergency Room at about 8pm. He was triaged quickly but we did not actually get into a room in the ER until the next morning. At this point, my father had not eaten anything because he was expecting to have surgery that day. We did not get transferred from the ER to a regular hospital bed until 6pm on the evening of Jan. 7, 2023 (22 hours after we first arrived at the ER). His surgery was moved to Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023, as there were no operating rooms available.

While spending the night in the ER's waiting room, we observed other patients that were in even worse pain and distress than my father was. Some of them left before they were seen because of the long wait. One woman whose was obviously in severe pain, left because of the long wait and because her pain was worse when sitting in a chair. The receptionist let her leave instead of getting her a gurney to lay on while waiting.

The crisis in our emergency rooms is very bad for patients, family members and hospital staff. For these reasons, I hope you favorably report Senate Bill 387.

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