



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 387 – Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times

SPONSOR: Senators Lewis Young, *et al.*

HEARING DATE: February 23, 2023

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 387 – Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times**, which creates the Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times to identify and recommend best practices for reducing wait times in emergency departments. Specific areas of study include emergency department staffing, triaging practices, and bed availability.

Maryland has the longest emergency department wait times of any state in the Union, with patients waiting an average of 228 minutes.¹ Maryland ranked worst in the nation on this measure for the past 7 years.² However, there are several evidence-based strategies for reducing emergency department wait times that could be implemented to make improvements.³

Reducing the proportion of emergency department visits with a longer wait time than recommended is a Healthy People 2030 goal, as longer wait times are associated with delayed care and patients leaving before being treated.⁴ As a result, longer emergency department visits are associated with poorer health outcomes. Establishing a task force to investigate this issue in Maryland and recommend evidence-based strategies may lead to much needed improvements.

¹ 2022 data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

² Ibid, rating sustained since 2015

³ <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality/reduce-proportion-emergency-department-visits-longer-wait-time-recommended-ahs-09/evidence-based-resources>

⁴ <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality/reduce-proportion-emergency-department-visits-longer-wait-time-recommended-ahs-09>

Prince George's County supports efforts to ensure timely and adequate access to emergency hospital services for our residents. Outside of patient care concerns, excessive wait times create operational challenges for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) units and hospitals. Reduced wait times would improve operational efficiency for the health care system and lead to better patient outcomes.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 387** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.