



State of Maryland
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems

Wes Moore
Governor

Clay B. Stamp
Chairman, EMS Board

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Executive Director

SENATE Bill 387
Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times

MIEMSS Position: Support with Amendment

Bill Summary: SB 387 establishes a Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department wait times to identify potential solutions to reduce excessive wait times and study and make recommendations for best practices to reduce emergency department wait times in Maryland.

Rationale:

- Excessive emergency department (ED) wait times have been a long-standing challenge and multi-faceted problem for the Maryland healthcare system for many years. Maryland ED wait times have consistently ranked among the worst in the nation.
- Excessive ED wait times can be affected by many factors, including staffing levels in the ED and throughout the hospital; limited hospital bed availability for patients needing admission, including behavioral health patients; and increased patient care requirements in the ED environment.
- Excessive ED wait times results in delayed treatment for patients needing emergency care and can detrimentally affect patients. There is substantial research in the medical literature documenting the impact of ED wait times and ED overcrowding on patient outcomes, including mortality and morbidity.
- Excessive ED wait times also adversely affect emergency medical services (EMS) ambulances transporting emergency patients to hospital EDs for treatment. EMS personnel must often wait for extended periods to offload, or transfer responsibility for, patients at hospital EDs, which reduces ambulance availability and prolongs response to 9-1-1 calls.
- MIEMSS and the Health Services Cost Review Commission have undertaken focused and coordinated efforts to study and understand the causes of excessive ED wait times and to develop strategies to improve timeliness of care and reduce wait times. See: <https://www.miemss.org/home/Portals/0/Docs/LegislativeReports/JCR-Emergency-Department-Overcrowding-201712.pdf?ver=2022-01-27-090447-303>; and <https://www.miemss.org/home/Portals/0/Docs/LegislativeReports/JCR-Emergency-Department-Overcrowding-Update-201911.pdf?ver=2022-01-27-090447-367>
- MIEMSS' amendment seeks to add MIEMSS as a Task Force member (see below). MIEMSS also recommends that the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission and the Maryland Health Care Commission be added as Task Force members.

MIEMSS Supports SB 387 as Amended and Urges a Favorable Report

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE Bill 387

(First Reading File Bill)

Amendment No. 1

On page 1, in line 15, strike “AND”.

Amendment No. 2

On page 1, in line 16, after “(4)” insert “the Executive Director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, or designee; and”.