

Testimony for SB 387 Task Force on Emergency Room Wait Time Bill

Dear Chairperson and members of the Senate Finance Committee, I urge you to support Senate Bill 387 and find ways to fix our emergency room failure. Here is my story.

In the late afternoon of Friday, December 9, 2022, my doctor informed me that I needed a pint of blood because I had low iron and hemoglobin levels. He told me to go to the emergency room of AAMC to obtain it and they would retest my blood. Saturday morning, I went to the emergency room. It was packed with people and there was a seven to nine hour wait. Sunday morning, I went back again and it was the same scenario. I didn't want to stay there that long when it was filled with people who were coughing and sick. Monday evening around 8 or 9 p.m. I went again and was told the same thing, but this time I stayed because I needed to get the blood. I was having trouble breathing. I found a chair and faced a podium-like piece of furniture and huddled there for about 7 hours with my mask on, facing away from the crowd, for the night. During that time there was a man in a wheel chair in front of me, covered in a blanket, who didn't move, and no one checked on him. It was very cold in there. I wish I had waited in my car, but I wasn't sure when I would be called. No one checked on me the entire time I sat there except to tell me it would be a few more hours. Finally, about 5 a.m. I was taken back to a room. After tests, the diagnosis was multiple pulmonary embolisms and low hemoglobin and iron. My hemoglobin was down to 5.3. I was admitted and stayed in the hospital a week for treatment and further tests. I needed three pints of blood along with heparin during my week-long hospital stay. Please support the emergency room wait-time task force bill.

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