



END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

Testimony on SB404/HB333

Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: FAVORABLE

To Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee;

To Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is Brige Dumais and I'm a Co-Chair of the End Medical Debt Maryland coalition. We support SB404/HB333 as amended to implement a process to reimburse hospital patients who were supposed to receive free healthcare but were wrongfully billed by a hospital. The amended bill lowers the threshold hospitals must meet to be required to continue issuing refunds from 10% to 5% and includes an enforcement mechanism allowing hospitals to be fined if they do not meet the 5% threshold.

Background

Last year, the legislature passed HB694 in response to a shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who should have received free medical care in both 2017 and 2018. These numbers were uncovered by the Health Services Cost Review Commission in an analysis produced last year as a requirement of legislation passed by this committee in 2020.

HB694 required the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) to convene a workgroup of all stakeholders to figure out the best process for refunding patients while also maintaining patient privacy and ensuring safe-addresses were used for survivors of intimate partner violence. The workgroup met throughout the fall and there was a consensus among all parties that patients should be refunded.

SB404/HB333

This year's bill is a technical bill that implements the best process to refund patients. The bill simply also provides support to assist affected consumers through the Office of the Attorney General and requires a report on progress to the General Assembly.

I respectfully urge this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Maryland patients by issuing a **favorable** report as amended on SB404/HB333. Thank you.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais

Co-Chair, End Medical Debt Maryland

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