

PAM LANMAN GUZZONE
Legislative District 13
Howard County

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations
and Health Facilities

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 216
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3083 · 301-858-3083
800-492-7122 Ext. 3083
Pam.Guzzone@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Good Afternoon Madame chair, Madame Vice Chair and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I'm Delegate Pam Guzzone, representing Howard County's District 13 and I am here in support of House Bill 786 Electronic Health Networks and Electronic Medical Records – Nursing Homes – Release of Records.

The Maryland Health Care Commission has designated the Chesapeake Regional Information System for Our Patients – CRISP – as Maryland's statewide Health Information Exchange. CRISP offers tools to improve the facilitation of care for the region's health care providers, including nursing homes.

Nursing homes contract with Electronic Health Networks (EHN) to manage the electronic health care transactions of patients within the facility. By law these records are provided to the CRISP system for certain purposes, including a State health improvement program. Federal law both protects a patient's records and makes them available to all members of the care team – with the resident retaining ultimate control over their data and its release.

Nursing homes can direct the electronic health network to release electronic medical records to a business associate of the nursing home. For the purposes of this bill the 'business associate' is a data mining company that analyzes nursing home electronic records to prevent hospitalizations by spotting emergent illness before it reaches the point where hospitalization is needed. In addition to preventing hospitalization through improved patient care, these efforts also create significant Medicaid cost savings.

A pilot program recently conducted in Montgomery and Ann Arundel Counties has shown this type of coordination of care to be very effective. During the pilot, the rate of hospitalization dropped by 25%. The program is now being expanded Statewide and consistent access to the data is critical to maximizing its positive effects. Unfortunately, the EHNs that work with nursing homes have created barriers by not releasing data in its entirety, or in a timely manner and some are trying to charge fees for the release of the data.

This bill makes clear that chosen partners of nursing homes within Maryland should have unimpeded access to patient data contained within the EHN. HB 786 ensures patient data flows appropriately to key partners in the continuum of care. It will reduce the instances of hospitalization for that population and improve their quality of life. It will also lead to financial savings.

For these reasons I request a favorable report on HB 786.