



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 786- Privacy Electronic Health Records

Hearing Date: March 29, 2023

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *Senate Bill 786 – Privacy Electronic Health Records*. The bill creates safeguards in the sharing of electronic health records across state lines through health information exchanges. As a network of federally qualified health centers, we were early adopters of electronic health records as a tool to improve care coordination. However, the *Dobbs* decision means that data sharing about abortion and other reproductive health information could put patients and providers in great jeopardy if it is shared with health information exchanges in states like Missouri and Texas. District attorneys in those states would have a clear legal avenue to subpoena those records within their own state, and potentially subject Maryland patients and providers to criminal, civil, and administrative penalties. We want all Maryland patients and providers to be able to seek legally protected care without the fear of prosecution or threats of violence.

These threats are not theoretical. When a hospital in Texas reported a woman to law enforcement this summer for a self-induced abortion, she was charged with murder, and the story went viral. While the charges were later dropped, the safety of the woman and her family has been put at risk. We ask for a favorable report. We need this bill to ensure providers and patients remain safe in Maryland. If we can provide further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.