



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 7, 2023

To: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair, House Judiciary Committee

Re: Letter of Information- House Bill 861- Criminal Procedure - Victim Compensation - Alterations

Dear Chair Clippinger:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 861.

Across the state, hospital-based sexual assault forensic exam ([SAFE](#)) programs employ forensic nurse examiners. These registered nurses receive special training in evidence collection and are experts in delivering trauma-informed care to survivors of violence and abuse. State law ensures survivors of sexual assault have access to emergency medical treatment for injuries sustained because of the assault with no out-of-pocket expenses.

MHA has proudly served as a member of the [Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee \(SAEK Committee\)](#) since its inception. This Committee collaborated to develop processes and issue guidance for stakeholders who support survivors of sexual assault. Additionally, the Committee supports legislation to protect survivors' medical information.

HB 861 omits important privacy protections for survivors included in Criminal Procedure §11-1007 which prohibits providers from submitting narratives describing a sexual offense or photographs of the survivor with a criminal injuries compensation board claim. To ensure consistency, this provision in HB 861 should be reviewed.

For more information, please contact:

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