



HB 1143 – Emergency Medical Services – Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission and Standardized Protocols – Establishment

Bill Summary: HB 1143 establishes the Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission as an ongoing initiative within MIEMSS to address issues related to hospital Emergency Department wait times. As drafted, the bill requires the ED Wait Time Reduction Commission, staffed by MIEMSS, to develop strategies, including those to improve emergency department effectiveness, reduce wait times, and enhance patient care; facilitate sharing of best practices; and oversee the development and implementation of standardized protocols and operational efficiencies in hospital emergency departments.

MIEMSS Position: Support with Amendments Offered by Maryland Department of Health and Health Services Cost Review Commission

Rationale:

- Protracted emergency department (ED) wait times have been a long-standing challenge for Maryland hospitals and the Maryland healthcare system for many years. Maryland ED wait times have consistently ranked among the worst in the nation for many years.
- Prolonged ED wait times are a multi-faceted problem that can be affected by a variety of aspects of the entire health care system – not only by factors existing within the ED or the hospital. Because of this, efforts to reduce ED wait times must consider the spectrum of health care needs and available health care resources, including, for example, the availability of outpatient and inpatient behavioral health care; skilled nursing facility bed availability and resources; alternative health care access points within a community; as well as factors within the ED and hospital itself, such as ED and hospital staffing, bed availability, and patient care requirements.
- Amendments offered by MDH and the HSCRC account for the complexity of the effort to identify workable solutions across the health care system to address ED wait times in Maryland. The amendments offered will modify the Health General Article to create an ED Wait Time Reduction Commission, staffed by MDH and the HSCRC, which will conduct its work over a three-year period. Commission members will include the health regulatory agencies, including MIEMSS, as well as representatives with operations leadership responsibilities at a Maryland hospital ED, and a representative of a behavioral health provider; an advanced primary care practice; a managed care representative; a patient advocacy representative and others. The Commission will have the authority to collect and analyze necessary data and will be appropriately-resourced to permit the development and implementation of policies and programs to reduce ED wait times.

MIEMSS Supports HB 1143 with Amendments Offered by Maryland Department of Health and Health Services Cost Review Commission and Asks for a Favorable Report