



April 5, 2024 / Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: Letter of Information

Bill: HB1524-Horse Racing - Racing Facility Ownership and Construction - Racing Operations

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding HB1524. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system, one of the largest employers in the Park Heights area of Northwest Baltimore. Our largest facility, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, a level 2 trauma program and independent academic medical center hosting up to 150 medical residents in a fully accredited medical education program is located adjacent to Pimlico Racecourse. LifeBridge purchased the easternmost twenty-two acres of the track's property in 2015, after enjoying full access from the owners for fifteen years prior to the purchase for daily parking by hospital employees. LifeBridge has been a supportive partner and continues to support the development of the Pimlico site.

LifeBridge has developed part of the property purchased near the Pimlico site over the last couple of years including the Center for Hope, a Child Advocacy Center that is the largest in the state. Center for Hope is a comprehensive violence intervention and prevention "Center of Excellence." Programming in the building includes prevention and treatment for domestic violence, elder abuse, street violence (Safe Streets and hospital-based responders) and the Baltimore Child Abuse Center. This first improvement, along with implementation of the Park Heights Master Plan vision is the beginning of safe-affordable housing, green spaces, a library, and other projects throughout southern Park Heights.

As requested, LifeBridge delayed construction for an ambulatory center that was to be co-located on this same property to allow further considerations of Pimlico redevelopment. Due to the delays, we have had to relocate the center to another site closer to the hospital. This requires new permitting and additional costs; however, we are committed to completing the project within a two-three-year period to limit the additional barriers this has created for our providers and patients accessing those services. As the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operation Authority moves forward with proposed plans, we ask for ongoing communication and transparency pertaining to development of the Pimlico Site and how any planned projects impact our nearby property, patient access to care and our employees. With the building of the Sinai Cancer Center, Ambulatory Center, and Pimlico construction we will have to find creative measures to address parking needs for the thousands of employees that work in the Sinai area.

We thank the Baltimore 41 Delegation in securing ongoing community engagement and seeking input through the Pimlico Redevelopment Community Compact. LifeBridge Health serves as an anchor institution with our partners seeking continued investments for the community at large. We ask the Senate to support the community investment provisions within the bill and future resources that align with the goals of the state and community. On behalf of LifeBridge Health we appreciate the considerations and commitment to the Pimlico Area Community.

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