



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

*To the Economic Matters Committee*

*Chair: Delegate C.T. Wilson*

*February 26, 2024*

***House Bill 0584: Workers' Compensation - Occupational Disease Presumptions - First Responders (Caring for Public Employees in the Safety Professions - CAPES Act)***

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

*Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 0584: Workers' Compensation - Occupational Disease Presumptions - First Responders (Caring for Public Employees in the Safety Professions - CAPES Act)*

*Public employees and safety professionals deserve our utmost support, especially when it comes to the diagnosis of thyroid, colon, or ovarian cancer. This law under certain conditions, Providing that certain firefighters, fire fighting instructors, rescue squad members, advanced life support unit members, and members of the Office of the State Fire Marshal who have thyroid, colon, or ovarian cancer are presumed, under certain circumstances, to have an occupational disease that was suffered in the line of duty and is compensable under workers' compensation law. The work of these brave men and women put them in harm's way, and they should recognize the dangers of the occupation that could lead to cancer diagnoses being covered by worker compensation law.*

*"Many other states have introduced new or revised statutory provisions regarding firefighter (and other first responder) presumptions for workers compensation (WC)—that certain diseases or injuries are presumed to have been contracted or sustained in the course and scope of employment."*

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,  
Jonathan Dayton, DrPH(C), MS, NREMT, CNE*