



Maryland Chapter

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Speaker of the House Adrienne A. Jones (Administration)

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 14, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 576 – *Mental Health –
Emergency Evaluation and Involuntary Admission Procedures and Assisted
Outpatient Treatment Programs*

The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), which represents the interests of emergency physicians and their patients throughout the State of Maryland, **supports with amendment** House Bill 576.

Among other provisions, House Bill 576 authorizes a psychiatric nurse practitioner to evaluate an emergency evaluatee for purposes of involuntary admission and authorizes the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to require the admission of an emergency evaluatee to an appropriate facility, rather than requiring the Department to provide for the admission within six hours. In addition, the bill requires each county to establish an assisted outpatient treatment program.

MDACEP supports the goals of the bill and supports the inclusion of a psychiatric nurse practitioner. However, in addition to psychiatric nurse practitioners, these evaluations are also often completed by licensed-clinical social workers. We recommend that the statue reflects the health care professionals who are currently working within their scope of practice and performing these evaluations. We do question the removal of the requirement that MDH provide admission to an appropriate facility within six hours. We recognize the challenges of this requirement, but the process is now unclear, and the burden seems to shift back to the emergency department to find a placement at a time when the emergency departments are already overwhelmed. We recommend that the current law stays intact.

For more information call:

Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
410-244-7000