



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475  
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269  
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm  
facebook.com/aarpm

**HB1143 Emergency Medical Services – Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time  
Reduction Commission and Standardized Protocols Establishment  
FAVORABLE  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
February 28, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP Maryland advocates for two million Marylanders age 50 over. AARP Maryland supports HB 1143. We thank Delegates Bhandari for this important legislation.

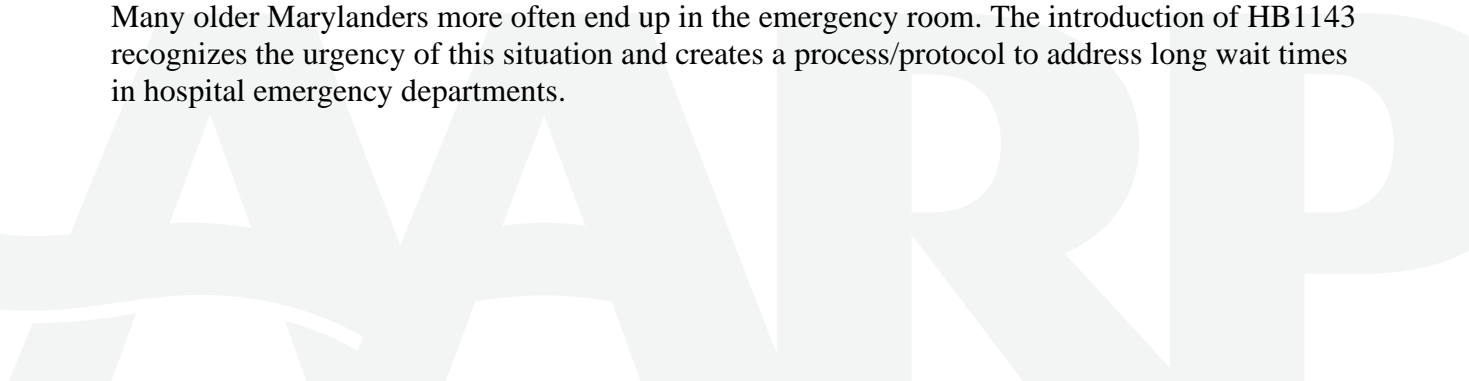
AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans aged 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security and supporting safety net for seniors and low-income households in the state of Maryland is a priority.

HB 1143 establishes the Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission in the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems to enhance the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of emergency medical services. It requires the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, with the advice of the Commission develop standardized operational protocols and establish a system for monitoring emergency department performance.

The fact that Maryland has one of the longest Emergency Department wait-times in the country, compels the establishment of this Commission to research and come up with solutions. No person who is in urgent need of immediate medical attention should have to wait up to four hours or longer to be examined and treated as found necessary. The reasons are many and this situation the result of complex factors—factors that this Commission should thoughtfully investigate and address. Hospitals have inadequate space and beds, are often short on staff, and the staff available is often overworked. Why is this the case in Maryland more so than other states in the country? What do they know and practice that we do not?

How can Maryland better organize a medical system where those who need attention by a medical doctor, but not an emergency department are identified and steered to the proper place? Examples of long emergency department wait times are endless.

Many older Marylanders more often end up in the emergency room. The introduction of HB1143 recognizes the urgency of this situation and creates a process/protocol to address long wait times in hospital emergency departments.



AARP MD respectfully asks for the Committee to give HB 1143 a Favorable report. If you have any questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451.