

Marylanders for Patient Rights

MARYLANDERS FOR PATIENT RIGHTS REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT ON HB1143 Emergency Medical Services--Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission and Standardized Protocols--Establishment

Marylanders for Patient Rights is a leading advocacy group for patients in our state, and we recommend a favorable report on HB1143.

After eight consecutive years of Maryland ranking as the worst in ED wait time of 50 states, this important issue is now getting the critical attention that it needs. There are two primary aspects of HB1143 that are vital to its success.

First, the membership of the Commission is clearly defined and includes key stakeholders, while remaining at a workable size of nine members. The size of the group helps to ensure that the group will work together efficiently and effectively in addressing the most essential issues, and that they will identify actionable steps that can help to alleviate some of the suffering by ED patients in the near term as well as longer term.

Second, HB1143 has clearly stated and pragmatic goals to address Maryland's dangerous and excessive ED wait times. Those goals include: the development of strategies to improve ED efficiencies, reduce wait times, and enhance patient care; and the development and implementation of standardized operational protocols to enhance efficiency in our EDs. Moreover, the new Commission will take advantage of advanced technology for real-time tracking and management of ED patient flow, which would help to right-size ED staffing.

HB1143 is both actionable and timely. While some may argue that the entire health care system must be analyzed simultaneously to address ED wait times, almost 90% of ED patients are ultimately discharged from the ED, while only 10% are admitted. This means that there are some problems unique to the ED that can be addressed, as proposed in this bill.

I am optimistic that HB1143, without amendments, could make a difference. I also strongly recommend that the Commission ensure transparency of their proceedings to the General Public.

Thank you,

A C Palmisano

Anna C. Palmisano, Ph.D, Director
Marylanders for Patient Rights
palmscience@verizon.net