



February 27, 2024

To: The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Adventist HealthCare

Re: SB729 - Security Guards - Use of Force Reporting - Health Care-Related Physical Interventions

POSITION: Support w/ Amendments

Adventist HealthCare is committed to providing a safe environment for healing in all our hospitals. The safety and security of our patients, staff, and visitors is a top priority. Hospitals work hard to achieve a balance between providing a friendly, healing environment and ensuring an adequate security presence to safely and effectively respond when incidents arise. SB729 is trying to strike that balance by addressing some of the challenges created for hospitals by last year's bill SB760.

Last year, SB760 regulated security guards across the state. For many venues this brought previously absent oversight. Hospitals, however, are different from other venues, facing unique challenges and operating under an existing regulatory framework that provides oversight and accountability. SB760 presented numerous concerns for our hospitals that we seek to address through SB729. These concerns include reporting requirements that present potential HIPPA compliance concerns, a broad definition of physical contact that could include routine actions taken daily by our security personnel, the administrative burden of duplicative reporting, and a potential chilling effect on our ability ensure a safe environment.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requires training for all hospital personnel on de-escalation and appropriate physical interventions. All Adventist HealthCare security personnel receive advanced level training from the nationally recognized Crisis Prevention Institute. The Maryland Patient Safety Program within the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) provides oversight and reporting requirements for hospitals when adverse events and injuries occur. Under this program, hospitals do not merely report that an incident occurred, rather we provide full root cause analysis and corrective action plans. This program provides a process for patients to file grievances and carries potential penalties including the revocation of a hospital license. MDH publicly reports this information in a HIPPA compliant manner.

The unique aspects of a hospital environment and existing regulatory oversight justify approaching hospital security differently than other venues. For these reasons, Adventist HealthCare supports SB729 with amendments.

