



Date: January 29, 2024

To: Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members Senate Budget and Tax Committee

Reference: SB188-Community Health and Safety Works Grant Program and Fund – Alterations

Position: Support

Dear Chair, Guzzone and Committee Members,

On behalf of LifeBridge Health, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on SB188. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County; Grace Medical Center (formerly Bon Secours Hospital), a freestanding medical facility in West Baltimore; and Center for Hope a center of excellence focused on provided hope and services for trauma survivors in Baltimore City.

LifeBridge Health's relationship with their nearby communities has always been at the forefront. Now more than ever, partnering with our neighbors to address social determinants of health – good schools, safe neighborhoods, effective transportation, decent housing, and a green, healthy environment, among other factors impact our communities' health fit squarely into our objectives. Investments through MD DHCD's Community Health and Safety Works grants have a strong record of improving the livability and economic potential in our catchment areas.

LifeBridge health is proud to partner with our surrounding communities to advocate on behalf of shared interests, build organizational capacity and access financial resources. In this past cycle alone, we served as a conduit to \$1.6 million in SEED funding for five organizations in Park Heights and Southwest Baltimore. These funds will support our partners in critical efforts that make neighborhoods safer and stronger. Sinai Hospital is also playing a key role in the work of the Pimlico Community Advisory Board, a collaborative designed to lift the voice of communities surrounding the Pimlico Racetrack and ensuring that the state's investment also benefits our surrounding neighbors. Additionally, we are a founding member of the Northwest Baltimore Partnership a coalition of community associations, nonprofit organizations, businesses, government agencies, and faith-based institutions working collaboratively to strengthen Northwest Baltimore from Park Circle to Pikesville.

The expansion of the eligible programs to include strategies in reducing violence is critical. When our health system surveys community members, gun violence comes in as one of their top concerns. We recognize the advantages of prevention over treatment for conditions like cancer and diabetes. At LifeBridge Health, we are similarly seeing positive results when taking the same public health approach to gun violence.

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Our violence interrupters, working in conjunction with our hospital violence intervention teams and case management services, have created a network that extends beyond the immediate crisis. Community events and resources have played a vital role in fostering trust and cooperation among residents. This comprehensive approach has contributed to the reduction of gunshot wound admissions at Sinai Hospital's emergency department by 42% since 2020. This year, we are on track to have fewer than one hundred gunshot wound admissions for the first time since 2014.

For these reasons we would ask the committee for a Favorable vote for SB188.

For more information, please contact:

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