

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB740
Health Care Facilities – Warrior Community Members (SFC Matthew Fast Act for
Warrior Healthcare)**

**Finance Committee
March 4, 2025**

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee,

Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee: The National Guard Association of Maryland (NGAM) is honored to come before you today in support of Senate Bill 740 – the SFC Matthew Fast Act for Warrior Healthcare.

This legislation ensures that Maryland’s health care facilities screen patients for military service and document that status in their medical records, aligning with national patient safety goals to improve care for service members, veterans, and their families.

Many civilian health care providers lack awareness of military-related health risks, leading to misdiagnoses and inadequate treatment. SB740 addresses this gap by making military service screening a standard practice, ensuring that those who have served receive informed, appropriate care.

Military service is a key social determinant of health, affecting both physical and mental well-being. Veterans and service members face unique risks—from toxic exposures and combat injuries to psychological stressors—that civilian providers often overlook.

More than half of U.S. veterans rely on civilian health care, yet many providers never ask about military history, missing critical health factors. As the National Academy of Medicine has highlighted, failing to recognize military service in health care settings results in suboptimal outcomes and disparities in care. By requiring providers to identify warrior community members and integrate that information into treatment decisions, SB740 closes this awareness gap and improves care quality for those who have served.

SB740 is a practical, necessary step to ensure Maryland's health care system properly serves its military community. It standardizes military-service screening across facilities, leading to earlier diagnoses, more tailored treatment, and better long-term health outcomes. By passing this legislation, Maryland can set a national example in honoring and supporting those who have sacrificed for our country.

NGAM urges a favorable report on SB740 to ensure all service members, veterans, and their families receive the quality care they deserve.

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