



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 240, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill (HB) 519 - Public Health - Hospitals - Parking for Patients - Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the “Department”) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 519 – “Public Health - Hospitals - Parking for Patients,” which requires each hospital in the State to provide inpatient and outpatient parking for the duration of the patient's admission or appointment. Additionally, hospitals would be required to provide signage indicating the availability of free parking.

The Department supports this bill’s initiative to provide patients with free access to parking when obtaining medical care. However, the Department respectfully submits clarifying amendments to exempt Department owned hospitals. The Department’s Healthcare System provides service lines that includes adult psychiatric patients and individuals with long term care needs. Most of the populations served by the Healthcare System do not have a driver’s license and are unable to operate a vehicle; however, the facilities do provide visitor parking.

Additionally, the construction required to ensure a parking space is available for every inpatient may not be feasible¹ due to cost² and other factors such as the topography of land, the amount of usable space that is available, and ensuring that the Department remains in compliance with the Maryland Department of the Environment's Storm Water Management Program.³

¹ Springfield Hospital Center’s capacity is 220 patients. Spring Grove Hospital Center’s capacity is 397.

² Construction of surface parking lot spaces can range in cost between \$3,000-\$5,000 per space.

³The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has issued a series of municipal stormwater permits to advance Chesapeake Bay restoration, reduce flooding, and make communities more resilient to the effects of climate change. One requirement is to reduce the impacts that impervious surface areas have through stormwater treatment with green infrastructure and other techniques.

The Department believes this clarifying amendment will ensure that the intent of the bill, to provide patients with free access to parking when obtaining medical care, is met.

If you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

In the House Health and Government Operations Committee

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 519
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, after line 3, insert

(3) “PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO ANY
DEPARTMENT OWNED HOSPITALS.”