

SB 792: Hospitals - Immigration Enforcement Action - Policy Requirement: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Finance Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE SB 792** during committee consideration or floor votes.

While hospitals should prioritize patient care and privacy, this bill creates unnecessary, one-size-fits-all restrictions that could interfere with legitimate federal law enforcement activities and compromise public safety. **Federal immigration authorities often seek individuals in hospitals in connection with serious crimes, *human trafficking, child exploitation, national security threats, or fugitive warrants*. Prohibiting voluntary cooperation—even in non-emergency, non-patient-care situations—could allow dangerous individuals to evade apprehension, potentially endangering hospital staff, patients, or the broader community after discharge.**

Hospitals are not sanctuaries exempt from federal law. Existing federal and state privacy laws (HIPAA, Maryland confidentiality statutes) already protect patient medical information, and hospitals are not required to proactively assist immigration enforcement. Mandating policies that broadly restrict cooperation goes beyond privacy protections and creates a hindering effect on lawful information-sharing when it is appropriate and legally permissible (e.g. public safety threats).

This bill also imposes administrative burdens on hospitals and risks civil penalties for compliance issues, diverting resources from patient care. **Local hospitals should retain flexibility to cooperate with federal authorities in situations involving criminal or public safety concerns without facing state-mandated restrictions.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against SB 792** and oppose legislation that restricts hospital cooperation with federal immigration enforcement in a way that could jeopardize public safety.

Thank you for your attention to this important public safety and health care policy issue.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals