



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0494 – Maryland Health Care Commission – Certificates of Need and Material Change Transactions – FAVORABLE**

**Bill Sponsor: Senator Beidle**

**Committee: Finance**

**Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition**

**Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

**My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0494 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition.** We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is to promote legislation that strengthens education, healthcare, public safety, environmental protection, and social justice—ensuring that every Marylander has access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

SB0494 directly advances that mission by strengthening transparency, accountability, and public oversight in Maryland’s healthcare system.

This bill repeals the current exemption from the certificate of need (CON) requirement for certain mergers and requires healthcare entities to provide notice of material change transactions to the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) and to the public. It also establishes a public interest review process to evaluate these transactions, including clear criteria for determining when a transaction warrants review .

These provisions are timely, necessary, and deeply aligned with Maryland’s commitment to equitable, high-quality healthcare.

Healthcare consolidation has accelerated nationwide, often occurring with limited public visibility and little opportunity for community input. While some mergers can improve coordination of care, others have led to higher prices, reduced access, and fewer choices for patients—particularly in rural and underserved communities. Maryland cannot afford a system where major structural changes occur without

transparent review or consideration of their impact on patients, workers, and communities.

SB0494 ensures that Marylanders are not left in the dark.

By requiring notice of material change transactions and establishing a public interest review process, this bill strengthens the state's ability to:

- Evaluate whether proposed mergers or acquisitions will increase costs or reduce access,
- Ensure that healthcare markets remain competitive and patient-centered,
- Protect community hospitals and essential services from destabilizing consolidation,
- Promote transparency and public accountability in decisions that affect millions of Maryland residents.

These safeguards are especially important in a state with a unique all-payer model and a strong commitment to cost containment and quality improvement. Maryland's healthcare system depends on thoughtful oversight and proactive monitoring of market changes. SB0494 provides the tools needed to maintain system stability and protect patients from the negative consequences of unchecked consolidation.

This bill also reflects responsible governance. It does not prohibit mergers; rather, it ensures that they undergo appropriate scrutiny and that the public has access to information about changes that may affect their care. Transparency and accountability are foundational to a fair and effective healthcare system.

SB0494 aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It strengthens healthcare oversight, protects consumers, and ensures that decisions with far-reaching consequences are made with transparency, community input, and a clear understanding of the public interest.

We urge the Committee to support this thoughtful, necessary, and community-centered legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0494.**

Jessica Gorski  
Executive Committee  
Maryland Legislative Coalition