

HB1323_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/1323- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Health Care Decisions Act - Surrogate Decision Making - Hospital Surrogate Committee

TO: Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/1323, **Health Care Decisions Act - Surrogate Decision Making - Hospital Surrogate Committee**

Surrogate panels (or committees) in hospitals are groups that make critical, non-emergency medical decisions for incapacitated patients who lack legal next-of-kin or advance directives. These volunteer panels provide a faster, cost-free alternative to court guardianship, often reviewing cases involving major medical treatments or end-of-life care.¹

Key Aspects of Surrogate Panels and Decision-Making:

- Purpose
- Composition
- Scope of Authority
- Function:
- Limitations

In some contexts, "surrogate panels" may also refer to the medical screening process for gestational surrogates, which includes extensive blood work, STI panels, and physical exams, as seen in [Family Source Consultants](#) and [Hatch Surrogacy](#).

Residents of Maryland need to have these surrogate committees to assure timely and effective health care decisions are made for them when necessary.

This bill will require hospitals to establish a surrogate committee to provide surrogate decision making for an unrepresented patient; authorize the surrogate committee to make treatment decisions for unrepresented patients under certain circumstances; and establish requirements for the composition, training, and procedures of a surrogate committee.

This bill is part of the panoply of solutions needed to effectively reduce wait times in emergency rooms and in other medical care situations.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/1323.

¹ Google AI Search "surrogate panels in hospitals"