



TESTIMONY FOR HB0944 – Maryland Health Care Commission – Certificates of Need and Material Change Transactions – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Cullison

Committee: Health and Government Operations

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 HB0944 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.

HB0944 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 both the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) and the public. It also establishes a public interest review process, including clear criteria for determining when a transaction must undergo that review .

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

Healthcare consolidation has accelerated across the country, often occurring with limited public visibility and minimal opportunity for community input. While some mergers may improve coordination of care, others have resulted in higher prices, reduced access, and fewer choices for patients—particularly in rural and underserved communities. Maryland cannot allow major structural changes to occur without

transparent review or a clear understanding of their impact on patients, workers, and communities.

HB0944 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. HB0944 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.

HB0944 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 HB0944.**

Jessica Gorski
Executive Committee
Maryland Legislative Coalition