



Maryland  
Hospital Association

**House Bill 1181- Family Law - Children in Out-of-Home Placement - Voluntary Placement Agreements**

**Position: *Support***

April 3, 2026

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**MHA Position**

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 1181.

This legislation addresses the urgent crisis of pediatric hospital overstay by enacting clear, enforceable timelines to assess and determine eligibility for voluntary placement agreements (VPA). HB 1181 would provide meaningful, measurable improvements in timely care for Maryland's most vulnerable children.

Most of the youth who are experiencing an overstay are waiting for placement or a bed to become available in a residential treatment center (RTC). The VPA process is a significant contributor to prolonged lengths of stay beyond medical necessity for these youth. HB 1181 seeks to rectify this problem.

After youth are medically cleared for discharge from the hospital, they can linger if they are waiting for a placement to be identified or if a placement has been identified but a bed is not available. When youth are in hospitals, the sense of urgency to find an appropriate placement can fade and delays can be prolonged. HB 1181 would establish clear, enforceable timelines that define exactly what entity is responsible for each step in the process and when that step must be completed. This brings long-overdue accountability to a system that has suffered from ambiguity and delay in the past.

Passage of this critical legislation will make a significant difference for youth living in hospitals when they no longer need acute medical care.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on HB 1181.

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Assistant Vice President, Government Affairs & Policy  
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org