

**Testimony of Dyana Forester**

**Director of Political & Community Affairs,  
United Food & Commercial Workers Local 400**

**Before the Health and Government Operations Committee  
Hearing on the Fair Care for Maryland Bill**

**March 2, 2020**

Chairwoman Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for HB 1169, the Fair Care for Maryland Bill.

My name is Dyana Forester and I am director of political and community affairs for United Food & Commercial Workers Local 400, which represents tens of thousands of Marylanders working in the grocery, retail, public employee and health care fields.

This bill embodies a fundamental principle of fairness — that if you receive millions of dollars in tax breaks, you are obligated to give something back to the communities you serve. That's why current law requires non-profit hospitals to spend a portion of their revenues on programs and activities that make our communities healthier.

Unfortunately, the law is not working as intended due to a lack of transparency, a lack of accountability and a lack of community input. Lawmakers and taxpayers have no way to assess whether hospitals are meeting their charitable obligations because the hospitals are not reporting the value of their tax exemptions, nor are they accurately disclosing their community benefits spending. And many are not engaging the stakeholders they are supposed to be supporting.

The Fair Care for Maryland Bill will fix these problems. It will create a working group that sets minimum community benefits spending for each hospital. It will require hospitals to clearly report their community benefit expenditures, tax exempt disclosures, and other financial measures. And it will mandate meaningful public input in identifying community health needs.

Through transparency, accountability and inclusion, HB 1169 will ensure that all Marylanders — and especially the residents of underserved communities that experience health inequities — receive the benefits non-profit hospitals are obligated to provide in exchange for their tax subsidies. Hospitals don't deserve to be treated as charities unless they clearly fulfill their charitable missions. Please pass this important bill.

Thank you.