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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of

**House Bill 286: Emergency Medical Services Paramedics - Immunization Administration -
Effective Date
March 24, 2022**

Chair Pinsky and esteemed members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 286: Emergency Medical Services Paramedics - Immunization Administration - Effective Date**. If enacted, this bill would extend the sunset for allowing EMS personnel to provide COVID and flu vaccines until January 1, 2025.

Current law, as amended last year, permitted EMS personnel this responsibility through January 1, 2023, under the direction of the EMS Operational Program, Ambulance Service Medical Director, or other qualified positions. That law also extended the ability to vaccinate, to paramedics working from commercial ambulance services. If enacted, **HB 286** will keep those provisions and extend the sunset for 2 more years.

We are not staking out new ground. In addition to the law passed last year, for over 2 decades, paramedics have been allowed to administer influenza and hepatitis B immunizations in addition to TB skin testing. With the scare of COVID-19 and the rush of people lining up for vaccines last year, this legislation proved vital in serving the health needs of Marylanders.

Like you, I am hopeful that the COVID-19 pandemic will end soon, thus obviating the need for this bill. And thankfully, COVID-19 patterns are trending downwards. However, this bill provides a safeguard and will allow EMS providers to continue to respond to ongoing challenges and support much-needed public health initiatives. In doing so, this bill may still alleviate possible burdens placed upon local health authorities and hospitals, who should focus on critical care issues. Additionally, it is important to note that there were not any negative repercussions from last year's law.

Overall, the need to vaccinate the general public may continue for longer than we all hope. House Bill 286 expands the concept of "mobile integrated health" to 2025 - a concept that has become key during the ongoing state of emergency. We've done it, we're doing it, and we're successful.

The only amendment from the House was making it a 2 year sunset, rather than a 3 year sunset. The bill passed 19-4 in committee and by a vote of 108-22 in the full House of Delegates.

I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 286**. Thank you.