



## House Bill 596

### *Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations  
Committee

Date: February 28, 2023

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 596. This bill would create the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program and provide resources for nonprofits operating nonemergency medical transportation networks in rural counties.

Counties recognize the importance of both emergency and nonemergency medical transportation. In 2022, MACo adopted as one of its legislative initiatives realigning emergency medical service (EMS) funding for the modern era. This initiative was successful in raising the Medicaid reimbursement for EMS by 50% and commissioning a study to look at, among other things, how to better handle emergency and nonemergency interfacility transport.

While just as critical to maintaining public health, historically, nonemergency medical transportation has been largely overshadowed by EMS. The link between service providers and their patients – many of whom require maintenance visits for kidney dialysis or similar care – faces a persistent shortfall in funding as these services lie outside the realm of governmental insurance coverage. In some cases, counties have filled this gap to ensure the safety and health of their residents, but this current patchwork is unsustainable and insufficient. By investing in these nonprofits directly, providers more readily focus on their mission: providing critical medical transportation in areas of need.

HB 596 seeks to provide relief to nonemergency medical transportation providers in rural counties. By investing in these services and providers, the General Assembly can ensure and hopefully stabilize this vital public service. Accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 596.