



SB 784
Informational Only

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Raymond Fang, MD, FACS
Chair, Maryland Trauma Center Network [TraumaNet]

DATE: February 13, 2024

TraumaNet wishes to provide information regarding **SB 784 – Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**. We appreciate the sponsors' commitment to support all of Maryland's trauma centers in delivering life-saving care and the best hope for return to health to our fellow Marylanders after injury that may occur any time of day or night.

TraumaNet is a multidisciplinary advocacy group focused on optimizing trauma care within Maryland with representation from each of the State's designated trauma centers and specialty referral centers. TraumaNet promotes excellence in trauma care by focusing on issues related to direct patient care, research, education, injury prevention and healthcare policy. TraumaNet partners with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) to create a collaborative statewide approach to trauma care.

In 2003, the Maryland General Assembly created the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund ('Trauma Fund') to financially assist Maryland's trauma centers. In the subsequent 20 years, the adequacy of this support had not been comprehensively reviewed. In 2023, TraumaNet supported the legislation that created the **Commission to Study Trauma Center Funding in Maryland**. The Commission concluded that *"it is in the public's best interest to fund a trauma system that is in a perpetual state of readiness for the next injured person"* wherever in Maryland they may be. TraumaNet supports the Commission's recommendations

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center ("Shock Trauma") anchors the Maryland trauma system and is recognized as a global leader in trauma care. As the state-designated Primary Adult Resource Center, Shock Trauma receives approximately 32% of its patients as transfers-in from other Maryland hospitals. In FY 2023, Shock Trauma treated 24% of the adult trauma patients in Maryland. The majority of injured adults are cared for by other trauma centers in the Maryland system allowing them to remain closer to their homes and families and preserving Shock Trauma's resources for patients with greatest need.

The Commission recognized that all of Maryland's trauma centers are under financial stress due to undercompensated costs to maintain trauma readiness.

These costs vary considerably related to level of trauma center designation, patient volume and geographic location.

The Commission's recommendations include:

- Modifying the existing scope of the Trauma Fund and adding additional flexibility for its administration especially in managing reserve funds to support evolving trauma center needs.
- Raising the already existing assessment on motor vehicle registration (\$5 per biennial registration) and potentially identifying other revenue sources (such as this bill) to support increased investment in trauma care.
- Directing the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) to audit, standardize and annually report trauma readiness costs across the trauma centers that are included in the hospital rate structure.
- Requiring Trauma Centers develop and report on trauma care quality measures to be accountable for the State's increased investment.

Dr. Thomas M. Scalea, Physician-in-Chief of the Shock Trauma Center, describes his institution as "*a gift from the people of Maryland to the people of Maryland.*" This is true of the entire Maryland trauma system that only exists to care for our fellow citizens at time of potential life-saving and life-changing need. TraumaNet is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders in supporting trauma readiness and optimized outcomes for injured patients at any time and at all locations within Maryland.

cc: Members, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee