



Health and Government Operations Committee

**HB1143:** Emergency Medical Services – Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission and Standardized Protocols – Establishment

**February 28, 2024**

**Position: Support**

The Arc Maryland is a statewide organization that works to protect and advance the rights and quality of life of people with developmental disabilities. This bill would establish the Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission in the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems to enhance the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of emergency medical services; and require the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, with the advice of the Commission, and in consultation with certain entities, to develop certain standardized operational protocols and establish a system for monitoring certain emergency department performance.

We believe this bill is an excellent alternative to HB 784 offered this session. We do not believe HB784 will get us to the desired outcome of developing a plan to resolve our ER Wait Time crisis, but HB 1143 will. Issues with HB 784, based on information The Arc has received from one of its respected members include:

- HB 784 This bill would repeat or extend a very large Task Force that has not been able to produce a final report at this time, although the objective of the Task Force was to do so by Jan. 1, 2024. The Commission offered through HB1143 has nimble, limited and representative membership.
- Despite the title of the bill, it is our understanding that the Task Force that would be continued through HB 784 has not been focused on ER wait times but rather hospital throughput- an equally important but related issue to overall ER wait times. The Commission established under HB 1143 would focus clearly on Reductions of Emergency Department Wait Times.
- The HB 784 workgroup lacked participation by patient advocates and front-line workers but has been heavily represented by hospital executives. While the perspectives of hospital executives are critically important to the work of the Task Force, there should be a balance of membership for meaningful outcomes. The Commission established under HB 1143 would accomplish a representative membership.

For these reasons, we encourage a favorable report on HB 1143. For more information, please contact: Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland [akolp@thearcmd.org](mailto:akolp@thearcmd.org)