



**Maryland Chapter**

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF  
EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 14, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 698 – *Estates and Trusts – Guardianship of the Person of a Disabled Person – Expedited Proceedings*

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The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), which represents the interests of emergency physicians and their patients throughout the State of Maryland, **supports** House Bill 698. This bill alters the time for the court to hear a petition for guardianship of the person from an “expedited manner” to within 10 calendar days if the purpose of the petition seeking appointment of a guardian is to obtain consent to discharge or transfer an alleged disabled person from a hospital.

It has been well-documented that wait times in Maryland emergency departments are among the longest in the nation, which is often the result of the lack of either inpatient beds and/or the availability of community services, such as behavioral health placements. Solutions to this problem need to be widespread. If a patient no longer needs medical services in a hospital, the patient needs to be discharged or transferred as quickly as possible to make room for patients needing medical services. The Judiciary must make process changes to ensure that these patients are discharged or transferred as expeditiously as possible. We would be remiss in not questioning whether “within 10 calendar days” may be too long given the urgent need for available beds and services in hospitals. Notwithstanding, we support House Bill 698 and request a favorable vote.

**For more information call:**

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