



House Bill 779

Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Emergency Service Transporters and Emergency Medical Services Providers - Reimbursement

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: March 4, 2020

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 779 as it seeks to modernize reimbursement for services provided by emergency service transporters to better meet growing demands and needs for services.

Emergency service transporters provide vital services to county residents in times of emergency and distress. They deserve to be adequately reimbursed for the treatment and services they provide. The mounting costs of emergency service transports and treatments are exceedingly being borne by county and volunteer providers without adequate increases in State support.

HB 779 would increase the rate for which the Maryland Department of Health is required to reimburse emergency service transporters for transportation of Medicaid patients to a hospital in response to a 9-1-1 call and would require the Department also reimburse EMS providers for mobile integrated health services. The increased transport rate is set at \$200 per transport and the rate for mobile integrated health services is set at \$100 per interaction.

Under current law, the transporters are unable to receive any reimbursements for their services or supplies despite responding to the 9-1-1 call and providing some level of treatment to the individual. This ultimately forces the county or volunteer services to shoulder the outstanding costs. The bill correctly recognizes that reimbursement should not solely be predicated on whether the patient was ultimately transported to a hospital emergency department. EMS providers are piloting innovative programs to provide non-emergency treatment to individuals in need. This need is particularly acute in rural areas of the state where there is less access to standard treatment providers.

The bill provides a fair, reasonable, and much needed framework to improve and increase reimbursement for emergency service transporters. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 779.