



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 31, 2024

To: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair, House Ways & Means Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 377- Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding- Alterations

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 377.

The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation in 2022 to establish the Therapeutic Child Care Program to deliver specialized childcare and early childhood education for children with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. The bill includes an annual appropriation.

There are a limited number of therapeutic child care programs in the state. These programs specialize in caring for medically fragile children. [PACT](#), an affiliate of Kennedy Krieger Institute, for example, cares for medically fragile children younger than 5 who are experiencing homelessness. Services are provided without regard to the family's ability to pay. PACT relies on grants and donations, which is not sufficient to cover the actual cost of these services.

[The Lourie Center for Children's Social & Emotional Wellness](#), part of Adventist HealthCare, has offered a therapeutic childcare program, specialized preschool, and family-focused services for more than 35 years. The Center serves approximately 4,000 children and families. Research shows the effectiveness of interventions through the Center, which also relies on grant funding and donations.

HB 377 would ensure the stable funding needed to continue these critical services does not end in fiscal year 2025. Sometimes children with special medical needs remain in hospitals beyond what is medically necessary if a parent or guardian does not have the resources or family support to care for a child at home. Funding for therapeutic childcare programs supports the child receiving care as well as their family.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 377.

For more information, please contact:
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