



Maryland
Hospital Association

COUNCIL ON LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY POLICY

Friday, Sept. 13, 2024, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Members

	Present	Absent
Kevin Sowers, Chair	X	
Elizabeth Wise, Vice Chair	X	
Timothy Adelman	X	
Craig Carmichael		X
Cheryl Cioffi	X	
Daniel Cochran		X
Jill Donaldson	X	
Marjorie Fridkin, M.D.	X	
Jeffrey Grossi	X	
Christopher Hall		X
Beau Higginbotham		X
Theresa Johnson		X
Kristin Jones Bryce	X	
Kathleen McCollum	X	
Mimi Novello, M.D.	X	
Ryan O'Doherty	X	
Bradley Schlaggar, M.D.	X	
Maria Harris Tildon		X
Meredith Tweedie		X
Jason Weiner	X	

Guests

Karmen Walker Brown, Adventist Healthcare; Annie Coble, Johns Hopkins Medicine; Annice Cody, Holy Cross Health; Chuck Conner, MedStar Health; Olivia Farrow, Ascension St. Agnes; Patrick Hogan, Cornerstone Government Affairs; Michael Huber, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine; Delora Sanchez Ifekauche, Cornerstone Government Affairs; Austin Morris, Children's National Hospital; Leslie Weber, Suburban Hospital; Jennifer Witten, LifeBridge Health

Attending MHA Staff

Melony G. Griffith, Ahmed Elsayed-Ahmed, Kelley Bender, Patrick Carlson, Steven Chen, Erin Cunningham, Brandon Floyd, Shar Fryer, Amy Goodwin, Diana Hsu, Jane Krienke, Natasha Mehu, Andrew Nicklas, and Jake Whitaker

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kevin Sowers, chair, called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. The July 17 minutes were reviewed and approved.

GAP UPDATE AND MEETING OBJECTIVES

MHA Senior Vice President of Government Affairs & Policy (GAP), Andrew Nicklas, provided an update on MHA's work and opportunities for member engagement including a legislative breakfast scheduled for Jan. 14, 2025.

BOT PRIORITIES AND MHA ACTION PLAN

Outcome

The Council provided feedback on the Board of Trustees' fieldwide priorities. MHA will convene an additional Council on Legislative & Regulatory Policy meeting prior to the Oct. 30 Board of Trustees meeting to present a slate of legislative initiatives for approval.

Main Points of Discussion

- Payer Denials & Accountability.
 - Members discussed the importance of solid data and inquired whether it was possible to get more granular data in order to stratify by payer, diagnosis code, etc. MHA is in talks with HSCRC to expand the information set.
- Rising Costs of Physicians
 - Members cautioned staff to be wary of potential impacts when addressing the issue of physician reimbursements.
 - Members suggested that restrictions pertaining to graduate medical education could be explored as a way of controlling physician costs.
 - Members are interested in greater salary transparency from health care providers that are owned or operated by private equity firms to demonstrate the unlevel playing field for bonuses, credits, and other incentives.
 - More research is needed on the long-term impact of private equity firms on Maryland's health industry.
 - The Council advised staff to continue to look at the data, opposition, scope, and narratives for the proposed legislative levers.
- Support Financial Health of Hospitals
 - As part of MHA's advocacy strategy, members suggested combining the two priorities "Support Financial Health of Hospitals and Rising Costs of Physician Coverage" to better support the hospital field's goals.

MHA Next Steps

- MHA to incorporate the feedback provided by the Council as the legislative strategies are researched and refined. Staff will provide a final slate of legislative initiatives at a future Council meeting.

2025 STATE BUDGET ADVOCACY

Outcome

Council members agreed to request a \$25 million reduction in the Medicaid Deficit Assessment (MDA) in the 2025 legislative session. The Council acknowledged that a reduction may be unlikely given the State's budget deficit and that maintaining the MDA at its current level would be a successful outcome.

Main Points of Discussion

- MHA provided an update on the State's budget, noting the negative outlook, heading into the 2025 legislative session.
- Members encouraged asking for a MDA reduction, understanding the request may face challenges given the state's fiscal outlook and that maintaining the status quo would be a success.
- Members encouraged MHA to educate legislators on the financial reality of hospitals.

MHA Next Steps

- MHA will request a \$25 million reduction in the MDA and continue to educate stakeholders on the financial realities faced by hospitals.
- MHA will support professional associations and other stakeholders in advocating for increases to the Maryland Loan Repayment Programs.

2025 SESSION LEGISLATION PREVIEW

Outcome

Council members acknowledged the many issue proposals impacting hospitals requiring MHA to organize strategic opposition. Council members emphasized the importance of continuing our focus on liability legislation for the 2025 Maryland General Assembly session.

Main Points of Discussion

- MHA presented an overview of several topics likely to arise during the 2025 session including liability, patient cost exposure, and labor/staffing ratios.
- Members emphasized the significance of liability issues on Maryland hospitals given the potential significant impact of large claims.
- Liability messaging should focus on access to care and that underwriters are writing lower coverage lower amounts, impacting hospital financial sustainability.
- Physician recruitment and retention costs continue to rise and impact access to care in rural and urban areas. In underserved regions, the number of community providers not associated with a hospital is dwindling.

MHA Next Steps

MHA to work with the Legislative Strategy Group to develop legislative proposals to present to the Council in October.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Council adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

*THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY THE
COUNCIL ON LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY POLICY.*