



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 359- Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations

Position: *Support*

January 29, 2025

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 359.

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 childcare programs in the state. These programs specialize in caring for medically fragile children. The [Early Childhood Education and Development Center](#), an affiliate of Kennedy Krieger Institute, for example, cares for medically fragile children younger than 5. Services are provided without regard to the family's ability to pay. The Center relies on grants and donations, which are not sufficient to cover the actual cost of these services.

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

Senate Bill 359 would ensure stable funding to continue these critical services. 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 them 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 SB 359.

For more information, please contact:

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