Maryland
Hospital Association

House Bill 1062 – Estates and Trusts – Jurisdiction Over Property of Minors or Disabled Persons – Authorized Transactions

Position: *Support*
March 4, 2026
House Judiciary 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 House Bill 1062. This bill establishes a targeted process allowing a circuit court, under appropriate circumstances, to authorize specific financial transactions, including access to financial records and actions to establish eligibility for government assistance programs, without requiring the appointment of a full guardian of property.

Hospitals routinely care for patients who are medically ready for discharge but cannot transition to the appropriate post-acute setting because no individual has legal authority to manage the patient's finances or complete benefits applications. Nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, and other post-acute providers generally require confirmed payment sources prior to admission.

When guardianship of property proceedings are necessary, the process can take months due to court scheduling delays and the limited availability of qualified guardians. While not directly addressed in this bill, these scheduling delays contribute significantly to the backlog of guardianship cases. During this period, patients remain in hospital beds despite no longer needing acute care services. This delays access for other patients who require hospitalization, contributes to emergency department crowding, and increases systemwide costs by providing care in a setting that is more intensive than medically necessary.

HB 1062 attempts to address the upfront, confirmed payment issue by allowing the court to authorize discrete transactions needed to secure coverage and arrange appropriate placement while maintaining judicial oversight. The authority is limited to specific actions necessary to effectuate discharge planning and benefits eligibility, not ongoing control of a person's finances or assets. It also aligns statutory law with court-developed processes intended to address guardianship delays while preserving due process protections.

Improving timely placement in post-acute care supports patient recovery, reduces avoidable hospital utilization, and improves access to beds for patients who require acute medical services. This bill is a step in the right direction to remedying these issues.

For these reasons, MHA requests a favorable report on HB 1062.

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