

HOUSE BILL 784

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By: **Delegate Bhandari**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2024

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait
4 Times to monitor and discuss the State's efforts to reduce emergency department
5 wait times; and generally relating to the Task Force on Reducing Emergency
6 Department Wait Times.

7 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
8 That:

9 (a) There is a Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times.

10 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

11 (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of
12 the Senate;

13 (2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the
14 House;

15 (3) the Secretary of Health, or the Secretary's designee;

16 (4) the Executive Director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency
17 Medical Services Systems, or the Executive Director's designee;

18 (5) the Executive Director of the Health Services Cost Review Commission,
19 or the Executive Director's designee;

20 (6) the Executive Director of the Maryland Health Care Commission, or the
21 Executive Director's designee; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(7) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

(i) two representatives of patient advocacy organizations;

(ii) two representatives of hospitals, one of whom represents a hospital in a rural setting;

(iii) one representative of a hospital with a pediatric emergency department;

(iv) one representative from a specialty psychiatric provider that provides both inpatient and outpatient services;

(v) four representatives who are emergency department personnel, including:

1. two licensed physicians;

2. one licensed nurse; and

3. one individual who provides direct care to pediatric patients in a specialized pediatric emergency department;

(vi) one provider of behavioral health services;

(vii) one high volume emergency medical services provider;

(viii) one representative of the nursing home industry;

(ix) one registered nurse employed in an emergency department who is a member of an employee organization that is an exclusive bargaining representative for health care workers; and

(x) one service employee employed in an emergency department who interacts with patients and is a member of an employee organization that is an exclusive bargaining representative for health care workers.

(c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

(d) The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(e) A member of the Task Force:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) The Task Force shall:

(1) through the use of an independent consultant, assess the State's efforts to reduce wait times in emergency departments in the State and implement the Maryland Hospital Association's Throughput Workgroup recommendations;

(2) continue to study the regulatory environment, access and availability of health care services, and inpatient bed availability in the State;

(3) coordinate with other State commissions examining issues related to workforce shortage and behavioral health capacity;

(4) review studies and recommendations on addressing workforce capacity issues;

(5) conduct an analysis of reimbursement policies and the effect of those policies on hospital reimbursement; and

(6) make additional recommendations, including legislative, regulatory, or other policy initiatives, regarding best practices for reducing emergency department wait times.

(g) On or before January 1, 2026, the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2024. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2026, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.