



March 5, 2012

The Honorable Peter A. Hammen
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1912

RE: HB 1090 Health-Palliative Care- Services and Education – **Oppose As Written**

Dear Delegate Hammen:

HB 1090 is intended to require certain hospitals (census greater than 50) to implement a palliative care program; require palliative care programs to provide and facilitate access to information and palliative care services and implement policy and procedures; requiring certain health care providers to provide information and counseling to patients and establish a Statewide Palliative Care Education Program in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The Legislative Committee of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce supports the education of our community members on palliative care options, but must oppose HB 1090 as written. According to the Center to Advance Palliative Care, 90% of Maryland Hospitals with more than 50 beds currently have a palliative care program in place, compared to a national average of 63%. Maryland's outstanding record of having palliative care programs in place demonstrates that there is not a need to create legislation requiring palliative care programs in hospitals.

The bill identifies physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants as health care providers that can counsel on palliative care services, but restricting counseling to only these individuals will cause an economic burden on hospitals. Many hospitals, including Carroll Hospital Center, utilize highly skilled registered nurses, medical social workers and chaplains as part of an interdisciplinary team that provides palliative care counseling in conjunction with the primary care physician.

This bill fails to identify a need for hospice and palliative care home health services referrals in the patient's home, provided at a lower cost than in a hospital, as part of the palliative care programs. This bill would duplicate efforts that are currently provided by the Maryland Hospice and Palliative Care Network.

For the reasons above, the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee asks that you give HB 1090 an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael McMullin'.

Michael McMullin
President
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

cc: Senator Joseph M. Getty
Delegate Susan W. Krebs