

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
2025 Legislative Session

Resolution No. CR-004-2025

Proposed by Council Member Blegay

Introduced by Council Members Blegay, Oriadha, Watson, Dernoga, Burroughs, and
Fisher

Co-Sponsors _____

Date of Introduction February 4, 2025

RESOLUTION

1 A RESOLUTION concerning

2 Prince George's and Montgomery County Council's Commitment to Reducing Emergency
3 Room Wait Times.

4 For the purpose of expressing Prince George's County Council's commitment to work
5 collaboratively with Montgomery County Council on a shared concern about ever increasing
6 emergency room wait times in their respective hospitals.

7 WHEREAS, Prince George's County and Montgomery County patients are currently facing
8 the critical and urgent issue of unreliable access to timely emergency care; and

9 WHEREAS, for almost a decade, Maryland has held the unfortunate title of having the
10 most extended Emergency Room wait time of the 50 states, with the current average for
11 Maryland hospitals at 250 minutes; and

12 WHEREAS, Maryland has been ranked among the lowest of 50 states regarding hospital
13 patient satisfaction for the past nine years, as measured by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
14 Services surveys; and

15 WHEREAS, Maryland has underperformed on Emergency Department measures since
16 before the start of the All-Payer model health care system; and

17 WHEREAS, studies have unequivocally shown that long emergency room wait times are
18 not just inconvenient, but also life-threatening. They are associated with an increased risk of
19 death and a higher likelihood of being admitted to the hospital, especially in those who are
20 elderly or vulnerable. The risk of patient mortality increases by 13% for every additional hour
21 spent waiting in the emergency room; and

1 WHEREAS, The Maryland Department of Health's 2022/2024 Health Care Workforce
2 Report thoroughly analyzed the state's healthcare workforce. It highlighted that one in four
3 nursing positions need to be fulfilled, primarily due to high turnover rates, changes in care
4 delivery models, and a need for more available talent. Moreover, Maryland's healthcare
5 workforce growth rate is 4.6%, significantly slower than the national average of 11.5% and a
6 percentage point lower than all the other mid-Atlantic states combined; and

7 WHEREAS, emergency rooms need to be more adequately staffed for the patient load.
8 Maryland is 36th out of 50 states in the number of nurses per 1000 persons and 45th in nurse
9 salaries, adjusting for the cost of living; and

10 WHEREAS, Maryland ranks 46th out of 50 states in hospital bed availability, leading to a
11 critical shortage. Patients are often forced to wait in the emergency room for inpatient beds,
12 which strains resources and delays care. Immediate action is needed to increase bed capacity and
13 improve hospital efficiency throughout the state; and

14 WHEREAS, Montgomery County's average ER wait time is 278 minutes and Prince
15 George's County's average ER wait time is 288 minutes, significantly higher than Fairfax
16 County's 172 minutes, which is closer to the national average. This comparison underscores the
17 opportunity for improvement in Montgomery and Prince George's County, as both counties
18 share similar characteristics, including population size, household income, number of hospitals,
19 and the percentage of residents aged 65 and older; and

20 WHEREAS, these shared characteristics create an impetus for collaboration among the two
21 jurisdictions.

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Prince George's
23 County, Maryland, that this Council in collaboration with the County Council of Montgomery
24 County, Maryland, call on hospitals to urgently address excessive Emergency Room wait times,
25 which hinder timely emergency care and threaten the health and wellbeing of the counties'
26 residents.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council in collaboration with the County Council
28 of Montgomery County, Maryland, request hospitals to implement immediate and effective
29 solutions to tackle insufficient emergency room capacity and a lack of available beds and are
30 calling on hospitals to use current tools and available resources to resolve these capacity issues
31 and enact targeted strategies to significantly reduce wait times within the year.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council in collaboration with the County Council
2 of Montgomery County, Maryland, request that the Health Services Cost Review Commission
3 (HSCRC) should account for patients’ access to care when evaluating hospitals’ resource needs.
4 Subsequent rate-setting should ensure there are sufficient staffed hospital beds to care for
5 residents seeking emergency care at our hospitals.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council in collaboration with the County
7 Council of Montgomery County, Maryland, agree to work with federal and state lawmakers to
8 uphold the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) and the Maryland Hospital
9 Patient’s Bill of Rights of 2019.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE
GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: _____
Jolene Ivey
Chair

ATTEST:

Donna J. Brown
Clerk of the Council