



Jolene Ivey
Chair
Council District 5

"Serving the People of Prince George's County!"

July 16, 2024

Joshua M. Sharfstein, MD
Chairman

Jon Kromm
Executive Director
Health Services Cost Review Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Dear Dr. Sharfstein and Mr. Kromm,

On September 1, 2017, the last County-owned hospital care delivery system in the State merged into the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) and became University of Maryland Capital Region Health (UM Cap Region). This marked a major milestone in a historic public/private partnership among the State, Prince George's County and the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) to make significant investment in the health and wellbeing of Prince Georgians and residents of the Southern Maryland region. The commitment to revitalize a financially unstable health care delivery system, while also winding down reliance on state and county support, was not entered into lightly. It was, however, necessary to address long-standing issues of health equity in the second most populous County in the State, to preserve the statewide trauma system, to continue the provision of health care and programming for our most at-risk communities, and to build high quality, technologically advanced clinical programs to serve the needs of residents right here at home. Almost 7 years and one global pandemic later, the partnership has proven a success on so many levels. We write to you today to ask for your continued support of the State's commitment to the transformation of care in Prince George's County.

Since 2017, UM Cap Region has established new clinical programs in cancer care, neuroscience, cardiac care, orthopedics, urogynecology and other specialty areas with long-standing access shortages, establishing it as the market leader for Prince George's County residents. These increased patient volumes include a 75% increase in births and a 350% increase in heart surgeries in the past three years alone. UM Capital Region has also significantly transformed quality of care, as demonstrated by UM Capital Region's stroke program being ranked #1 in the state by Healthgrades and recognition of their cardiac and diabetes programs by US News and World Report.

Also foundational to the long-term goals of the original partnership, UM Cap Region is growing access to primary care with family medicine located at its new medical office space inside the beltway at New Carrollton; family and internal medicine residency programs that deploy medical residents to multiple practice sites and help grow the pipeline of future primary care providers in the County; and a small network of affiliated primary care practices that see patients referred from UM Cap Region emergency departments.

While creating access to state-of-the-art clinical programs and simultaneously building primary care capacity in Prince George's County, UM Cap Region has also maintained its commitment to emergent care and community-facing programs that address social determinants and treat chronic conditions that disproportionately impact County residents. These programs include Level II Trauma care, Neonatal Intensive Care in the only Level III NICU in all of Prince George's County and Southern Maryland, hospital-based maternal fetal medicine, comprehensive Sickle Cell treatment, domestic violence and sexual assault care and counseling, community-based violence intervention, among others.

UM Capital Region is the only hospital system in the County providing these essential services that are critical to the health and safety of County residents, but come at a significant cost, only a portion of which is covered by hospital reimbursement rates.

While UM Cap Region is delivering on its charge to address health inequity in Prince George's County and the health disparities that inequity has created, the Maryland hospital rate setting system must make accommodations to support the unprecedented care transformation that UM Cap Region is delivering. Despite exceeding the originally envisioned goal for performance improvement, UM Cap Region/UMMS has incurred \$200 million dollars of financial losses since 2017 and those losses are projected to continue. Obviously, this is not sustainable.

Elected leaders statewide, including the undersigned in Prince George's County, have championed Maryland's unique hospital rate setting structure, that in its latest iteration promises to "transform care delivery across the health care system with the objective of improving health and the quality of care." Surely this is a structure that should inherently recognize and reward the transformation of care in our County. While cost control is laudable and necessary it cannot be the paramount consideration in a County of almost a million residents, in a State of six million, seeking to transform a delivery system that a decade ago was only able to provide safety net care.

We strongly support the request for a rate adjustment that appropriately recognizes the unique opportunities and challenges inherent in delivering on the vision for care transformation in Prince George's County and the Southern Maryland region. This request is supported by the expectations and objectives that were foundational to the partnership among the State, County and Medical System more than a decade ago and that still describe the health care delivery system our County, our constituents, our region and our State deserve today. The health

system that grew out of that historic investment has made unprecedented progress toward realizing the vision of more equitable and accessible high quality health care in Prince George's County. We respectfully request your support.

Sincerely,

Angela Alsobrooks
Prince George's County Executive

Jolene Ivey
Chair, Prince George's County Council

Sydney Harrison
Vice Chair, Prince George's County Council