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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Capital Budget – Miscellaneous Grants – Sinai Hospital Primary and Specialty Care Complex

Capital Budget Subcommittee
March 9, 2021

Support Governor's \$1 Million Dollar Allocation, Reject DLS's Recommended Cut

Background: The State of Maryland has entered a bold five-year health system transformation pilot program that brings hospitals and their communities closer together to improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs. Quality-based financial incentives reward providers for effectively managing chronic diseases to prevent the need for hospitalization, or to provide early intervention. This mission is especially important for Sinai Hospital because it serves a high-risk population in Park Heights, the center of the area's Jewish and African American communities. The Complex will reduce preventable emergency room visits by combining collaborative, multidisciplinary outpatient care at the primary, specialty and subspecialty levels. In turn, this will lower costs for the state, increase the health of the local community, and directly address documented health care disparities experienced historically in many of these communities, and even moreso as a result of the COVID pandemic.

The Complex will house programs addressing major chronic diseases affecting the primary service area including:

- Primary Care Services
- Pediatric Outpatient Services (Gastroenterology, Radiology, Endocrinology, Primary Care and Surgery)
- Endocrinology, Including Diabetes Care and Education
- Pharmacy and Laboratory
- Integrated Cardiac Services, Diabetes Care and Pulmonary Care
- Infectious Disease/HIV Care
- Integrated Behavioral Health
- Disease Management and Education Centers
- Pulmonary Care
- Rheumatology

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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- OBGYN Outpatient Services Including Gynecological Surgery and Perinatology
- Gastroenterology

Response to DLS's Recommendation: We urge the committee to reject DLS's recommendation to defer additional funding until FY23. Construction on the Complex is scheduled to begin in FY23 (December 2022). This request for State capital funds is being made to support final planning/design, construction, equipment, and other necessary expenses. While originally slated for an earlier construction timeframe, construction was delayed in earlier years in part until the completion of the Stadium Authority's Pimlico Study in December of 2018. In 2020, COVID forced cessation of all capital projects at any stage and a focus on COVID-related capital improvements to manage the increase in affected patients, and because of fundamental changes to healthcare delivery such as increased use of telehealth that altered the scope of the project. Sinai is now ready to complete the planning and design process and begin construction in FY23, with the rate of spending expected to quickly accelerate for funds provided by both the State and Sinai. Thus, we respectfully request that the committee support the \$1 million as allocated in the proposed FY22 budget.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.