



January 23, 2013

The Honorable Brian E. Frosh
Chairman
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Lisa A. Gladden
Vice-Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill (SB) 87—Support

Dear Chairman Frosh and Vice-Chair Gladden:

On behalf of Children's National Medical Center (Children's National), I am pleased to support Senate Bill (SB) 87. Children's National applauds the chair of the Judicial Proceedings Committee for his leadership in introducing this bill, which would require all occupants of motor vehicles under age 16 to be restrained by an appropriate seat belt or child safety seat.

Children's National Medical Center, a 303 bed not-for-profit academic medical center, is located in Washington, DC, but serves the pediatric health care needs of the broader Washington metropolitan region. Located just three miles from the Maryland border, Children's National annually devotes nearly 60% of its inpatient care to children from Maryland. With five outpatient centers in Maryland and specialty care services provided in eight Maryland locations, Children's National is proud to be one of the largest providers of high quality pediatric primary, specialty and emergency care to Maryland's children and families.

Children's National is pleased to be an integral part of Maryland's world-class trauma system. Designated by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) as one of the state's two Level I Pediatric Trauma Centers, nearly 60 percent of Children's trauma cases originate in Maryland. In fact, for the past two years, Children's National has treated more pediatric trauma cases than any other hospital in the state. In 2010, the Emergency Medicine and Trauma Center (EMTC) at Children's National provided care for more than 85,000 children. Because of the large number of visits, Children's National's EMTC can be, on any given day, one of the busiest pediatric emergency departments in the country.

Children's National has long been an advocate for child passenger safety and implemented programs in the region that have raised awareness among parents. Safekids Worldwide, the first national advocacy organization solely dedicated to pediatric injury prevention, was founded by Children's National in 1987. Among other issues, Safekids Worldwide has been actively involved in advocacy efforts to upgrade state child restraint and seat belt laws through its coalitions in states across the country. Children's National also operates a Car Seat Inspection Station, where certified safety technicians show parents how to properly install car seats.

When installed and used correctly, child safety seats and seat belts can prevent injuries and save lives. Child safety seats can reduce fatal injury by up to 71 percent for infants, and up to 54 percent for toddlers aged 1 to 4. Yet despite major advances in child passenger safety over the past 30 years, motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for children between 2 and 14 years of age. Nationwide in 2009, 1,314 children ages 14 and younger died in motor-vehicle related incidents, and more than 179,000 received non-fatal injuries. Among child passenger deaths that year, 31 percent of children under age 4 and 42 percent of children ages 4 to 7 were unrestrained. African-American children ages 8 to 12 have the lowest restraint use among children; an estimated 28 percent are not restrained while riding in a motor vehicle.

Children's National Medical Center is committed to policies that improve the health and well-being of the children we serve. In fact, it is part of Children's National's mission to improve health outcomes for children regionally, nationally and internationally. As such, Children's National Medical Center respectfully urges the Committee to give a favorable report to SB 87.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Lee A. Savio Beers, MD
Medical Director for Municipal and Regional Affairs
Child Health Advocacy Institute
Children's National Medical Center